

# Mailpiece Quality Control (MQC) Program—Contents

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Self-Study Guide Modules, May 2001

## **INTRODUCTION**

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## **CLASSES OF MAIL**

## **PERIODICALS**

## **PROCESSING CATEGORIES**

## **ADDRESSING**

## **USPS BARCODES**

## **AUTOMATION REQUIREMENTS**

## **NONAUTOMATION MAILINGS**

## **POSTAGE PAYMENT METHODS**

## **REPLY AND RETURN MAIL**

## **SPECIAL SERVICES**

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## **APPENDIX**

**W**elcome to the Mailpiece Quality Control program. This course is designed to assist the individual (or group of individuals) responsible for creating mailpieces for entry into the U.S. Postal Service's mailstream.

This program will help graphic artists, administrators, sales representatives, or anyone else involved in the preparation of large mailings, accomplish their job with proficiency and confidence.

After completing this course, you will better understand the acceptance requirements of the U.S. Postal Service as they relate to mailpiece design. In addition, you will have enough understanding of the requirements of the presorted mailing process to analyze discount and payment options for your clients. You will also have sufficient understanding to consult reference materials to help make your job easier.

Poor mailpiece design can cause delays in the processing and delivery of your mail. Mailpiece quality control is a systematic method of ensuring that designs coming from individuals in your company are acceptable for mailing and are eligible for *worksharing* discounts from the Postal Service. Good designs give you the confidence that your time and effort will pay off in postal "worksharing" discounts and successful postal processing of your mail.



## MAILPIECE QUALITY CONTROL (MQC) PROGRAM SELF-STUDY GUIDE MODULES

1. CLASSES OF MAIL
  - MAILABILITY, EXPEDITED SERVICES, FIRST CLASS MAIL,  
STANDARD MAIL AND PACKAGE SERVICES
2. PERIODICALS
3. PROCESSING CATEGORIES
4. ADDRESSING
5. USPS BARCODES
6. AUTOMATION REQUIREMENTS: LETTERS, FLATS, AND PARCELS
7. NON-AUTOMATION MAILINGS
8. POSTAGE PAYMENT METHODS
9. REPLY AND RETURN MAIL
10. SPECIAL SERVICES
11. APPENDIX

**!** *This course deals exclusively with the requirements for DOMESTIC mail. For specifications regarding International mailings, refer to the International Mail Manual (IMM).*

## DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

As the mailpiece quality control (MQC) specialist within your organization, you will either perform an actual mailpiece design function or administer your facility's ongoing quality control procedures concerning physical mailpiece design. From time to time, as an MQC specialist, you may be called upon to perform either function.

You are responsible for the evaluation and approval of the physical mailpiece design as it relates to the processing category, the class of mail, and, in some instances, the postage rate claimed. Completion of this course gives you the background necessary to identify design limitations and suggest positive changes. You will also be familiar with the reference material that contains the answers you are looking for now or in the future.

As the MQC specialist, you can correct problems before the mail is taken to the Business Mail Entry Unit (BMEU) and inconsistencies are discovered. You can become the key quality technician within your facility for planned mailings. Your responsibility will end when the Postal Service accepts your mailpiece, and mailing, into the mailstream.

As the MQC specialist, you must ensure that the physical design of the mailpiece meets postal requirements. You will become the liaison with Postal Service personnel on mailpiece design issues. Your expertise can save your company and/or your clients real time and money in all phases of mail production. If you feel you currently don't know enough about postal standards and regulations, this course will introduce you to nearly all of the basic postal concepts and requirements you'll need in your job.

## INITIAL DESIGN ASSISTANCE

If your company processes its own mail exclusively, you will no doubt assist in the physical layout and design of its mailpieces. Assisting your company's clients with their mailpiece design allows you the opportunity to recommend a mailpiece design that:

- Fits the customer's needs.
- Qualifies for the best postage rate possible.
- Qualifies for expeditious processing.

In all cases, you will function as a mailpiece design consultant. You will provide information concerning critical physical design elements. The design must satisfy the needs of your client and simultaneously meet Postal Service guidelines for rate qualification and processing.

The desires of your firm or your client's and postal requirements are not always in perfect harmony. Your client may wish to distribute a marketing or advertising mailpiece of a distinctive color and design so that the article stands out in the mailbox, for example. However, the client's color selection may not provide enough contrast between the print and the paper to qualify for the prebarcoding discounts you've quoted and they expect.

The Barcode Sorter (BCS), for example, must be able to see barcodes applied by the customer or by the USPS Optical Character Reader (OCR). The OCR, similarly, must see addresses with an electronic scanning eye and make matches with the address elements in computer memory. The OCR then sprays a barcode containing the necessary sorting information onto the mailpiece.

## SOURCES OF HELP

Developing the ability to design a mailpiece qualifying for USPS postage discount programs and yet still meeting individual client needs will require hard work and practice. You can count on continued guidance from your local postal business mail entry (BME) professionals.

The mailpiece design analyst (MDA) is your best ally in judging whether your designs meet technical specifications of the *Domestic Mail Manual* (DMM). In addition, there are other members of the postal business mail entry staff who can assist you in putting together the best mailpiece design possible. This program will introduce you to all of them.

After completing the training, you'll have acquired the basic information necessary to serve as a valuable postal resource and consultant for your company and its customers.

## DESIGN APPROVAL

It is important that you have your mailpiece designs evaluated before they are printed. This will smooth their way through the business mail acceptance system. Consult with your local postal professionals to confirm compliance with existing guidelines. Contact them whenever you have a question on certain mailpiece designs. This is especially important when those articles are intended for automation discount postage rates.

To ensure that a mailpiece is automation compatible, contact the local mailpiece design analyst (MDA); an account representative (AR), if one has been assigned to your company; or your local postmaster or mailing requirements office.

The MDA is specially trained on the technical characteristics of automated processing equipment and the assessment of related mailpiece designs. If you need assistance and don't know the MDA, AR, or mailing requirements office in your area, contact your local postmaster or use the MDA locator on the USPS's web site @ <http://www.usps.com>.

## RECOMMENDING DESIGN CHANGES

If, after examining a mailpiece design, you determine that alterations are needed to meet Postal Service mailability, automation compatibility, or barcode readability requirements, you should recommend appropriate changes.

When this mailpiece undergoes a second review, if additional changes are necessary, you should contact the client again. The key is to ensure that your company's and client's mailpieces are acceptable for mailing and qualify for the best possible postage rate.

## CONTINUOUS MAILPIECE QUALITY CONTROL

Mailpiece quality control at each stage of mailpiece design is essential to the smooth entry of business mailings at your local business mail entry unit (BMEU). As the MQC specialist functioning in a continuous quality control capacity, you should make an initial evaluation of the mailpiece before forwarding it on to the next design stage. At each milestone, or decision point, in the process you need to determine if:

- The mailpiece is acceptable for mailing.
- The mailpiece qualifies for the class of mail and postage rate claimed.
- The mailpiece is compatible for processing on postal automated equipment.
- There are any additional recommendations for improvement such as prebarcoding or the addition of a USPS value-added service.



*A more detailed explanation of the duties, responsibilities and hierarchy of postal personnel can be found in the Appendix titled "Postal Contacts" at the end of this workbook.*

The mailpiece design and planning process is a series of decisions that represent a balance between the purpose of the mailing and the potential postage costs. A client may need a letter-sized mailpiece to successfully convey their message, but would prefer to pay the lower postcard rates. However, you may delight the very same client by pointing out that properly designed letter-size mailpieces can qualify for additional automation discounts!

Helping your company's artists or your company's clients modify their mailpieces to meet Postal Service standards and guidelines helps ensure a smooth acceptance process. This places you in an important position to determine whether the planned savings from postage discounts will be realized at the business mail entry unit.

This program will introduce you to the concepts you need to know now, and in the future. The mailpiece design analyst (MDA) and the rest of the business mail entry staff are available to help you in every step of the process. We have provided margin notations throughout this self-study guide for:



Critical decision points and cautions and important notations.



Specific design tips.



Clarifications and cautions regarding postal acceptance procedures.



Valuable ideas and suggestions about postal products and services.



Materials for further reference not included in this course (often available upon request at your local mailing requirements office or post office).

Feel free to use the ample margins to add your own notations. Adding personal reminders will help ensure that you are engaged in your training and are getting the most out of the material.

## COURSE ORGANIZATION

The format of the modules in this course represents a logical progression of the mailpiece design and planning process from concept to finish. The matrix on the following page shows the basic information, from top to bottom, that you need to know to determine the mail classification and discount category most appropriate for any particular mailing/mailpiece.

Each module of the MQC self-study course is represented in the decision matrix. The intention is to provide you with a logical approach to these concepts, and to provide a guideline to follow when dealing with clients on design issues. The matrix is designed as a decision tree that flows from start to finish (top to bottom). In your day-to-day dealings with customers, however, you may encounter these issues in *any* order.

The MQC DECISION MATRIX can be used as a "macro" checklist for design issues during the planning process. It can also be used as a quick reference index for the subject matter contained in this course. Each module of the course, along with a brief description of the subject matter covered in that module, is included in the matrix.

## POSTAL TRAINING MATERIALS Guides

- **TD-34A, Mailpiece Quality Control Training Program: Administrator's Guide:** a guide that contains all the information needed to properly implement and administer the course.
- **TD-34B, Mailpiece Quality Control Training Program: Self-Study Guide:** a guide that contains all the materials necessary for the candidate to complete the course. There are 10 modules of instruction, all of which contain module application exercises appropriate to the materials contained in that module.

## MQC DECISION MATRIX

MODULE	QUESTION/DECISION POINT
CLASSES OF MAIL	<p><b>What is the content?</b> <b>Is it mailable?*</b></p> <pre> graph TD     Q1[What is the content? Is it mailable?] --&gt; C1[Personal letter, bill, business transaction]     Q1 --&gt; C2[Circulars, solicitations, advertising, promotional]     Q1 --&gt; C3[Merchandise]     Q1 --&gt; C4[Newsletter, other Publication]     C1 --&gt; R1[First-Class Mail]     C1 --&gt; R2[Priority Mail]     C2 --&gt; R3[Standard Mail]     C3 --&gt; R4[Package Services]     C4 --&gt; R5[Authorized Periodical]     R5 --&gt; Q2[Periodicals Requirements] </pre> <p>Personal letter, bill, business transaction First-Class Mail Priority Mail</p> <p>Circulars, solicitations, advertising, promotional Standard Mail</p> <p>Merchandise Package Services</p> <p>Newsletter, other Publication Authorized Periodical</p>
PERIODICALS	Periodicals Requirements
PROCESSING CATEGORIES	<p><b>What is the size?</b></p> <p>Card Letter Flat Parcel</p>
ADDRESSING	<p><b>Address Update Required/Desired?</b></p> <p>Move Update 5-digit Verification CASS Ancillary Service Endorsements</p>
USPS BARCODES	<p><b>Automation discounts desired/feasible?</b></p> <p>YES NO</p>
AUTOMATION REQUIREMENTS	<p>Barcoded Card/Letter Barcoded Flat Barcoded Parcel</p>
NON-AUTOMATION MAILINGS	Basic Presort, Upgradable, Carrier Route Requirements
POSTAGE PAYMENT METHODS	<p><b>Postage payment method?</b></p> <p>Precanceled Stamps Meter Permit Imprint</p>
REPLY AND RETURN MAIL	<p><b>Reply/Return Mailpiece Desired?</b></p> <p>Merchandise Return Service Business/Courtesy Reply Mail Reusable Mailpieces</p>
SPECIAL SERVICES	<p><b>Additional Services Desired?</b></p> <p>Delivery Confirmation Return Receipt COD CONFIRM Insurance Special Handling Registered Certified</p>

\* Most mailable items may be sent either by Express Mail, Priority Mail, or First-Class Mail.

## RESOURCE KIT

The following additional training materials are provided to you as part of the optional resource kit. While not necessarily required to complete this course, you are encouraged to refer to them during this program when referenced.

This will improve not only your comprehension of the course material, it will also build familiarity with important reference and source material for future use. The materials include:

### Publications

- **Publication 32, *Glossary of Postal Terms*:** a comprehensive glossary containing definitions of commonly used postal terms and acronyms.

### Manuals

- ***Domestic Mail Manual (DMM)*:** a Postal Service policy manual that covers domestic mail standards and contains regulations for postage rates, mail classification, and mail preparation requirements. The DMM is updated semiannually. You will be provided with the most current issue as part of this course. Mailers are strongly encouraged to subscribe to the DMM to remain current with postal regulations. An order form can be found near the front of the DMM.

- **Postal Explorer CD:** an electronic version of the *Domestic Mail Manual* with word search and “hypertext link” features. The CD also includes electronic versions of the following postal publications:
- **Publication 25, *Designing Letter and Reply Mail*:** a guide to designing letter-size mail for automation and OCR compatibility.
- **Publication 63, *Designing Flat Mail*:** a guide to designing flat pieces for automation.
- **Publication 417, *Nonprofit Standard Mail Eligibility*:** a comprehensive reference and guide to content-based restrictions and qualifications for Standard Mail (A) nonprofit rates.
- ***International Mail Manual (IMM)*:** the DMM’s international counterpart.

## Templates

- **Notice 67, Automation Template:** a multi-purpose automation overlay for verifying automation-compatible letter-sized mailpiece designs.
- **Notice 3A, Letter-Size Mail Dimensional Standards Template:** used to determine if a mailpiece physically meets the size, shape, and thickness requirements for letter-size mail.
- **Item 07:** a template for aligning facing identification marks (FIMs) and the POSTNET barcodes on letter-size mail.

## POSTAL TRAINING MATERIALS REFERENCE

All training materials normally included in this course with the resource kit are noted in the text with the following gray box and icon:



References to electronic versions of postal publications included on the Postal Explorer CD are indicated by a gray box and computer icon.



The publications on the Postal Explorer CD are also available in hardcopy from your local post office.

All the course material, including the *Domestic Mail Manual* and this self-study guide, plus much more, is available online through Postal Explorer.



Postal Explorer is available on the World Wide Web at: <http://pe.usps.com/>.



### SUMMARY

The USPS's special status as a universal service prohibits us from offering discounts to mailers based on volume. Therefore, the discounts the USPS offers mailers for presorted mailings are based on a concept called worksharing. The more of the Postal Service's work you do prior to submitting your mailing, the greater the discount the USPS can offer. The USPS recoups your discount in workhour savings from your presorting, hence the term workshare.

When you submit a discounted mailing, you are actually functioning as a commercial partner with the USPS. Mailpieces meeting

automation or barcoded discount requirements bypass one or more of the Postal Service's sorting operations. This represents savings for the USPS in processing costs, and forms the basis of your discount from full rate postage.

Helping your company's artists or clients modify their mailpieces to meet Postal Service regulations and guidelines helps us process and accept your mail more efficiently. The concept of worksharing for postage discounts places you in an important position to ensure that planned savings from postage discounts are realized at the business mail entry unit (BMEU).

Every piece of mail entered into the Postal Service mailstream belongs to a certain class, and the class to which it belongs determines the way it is handled. Contents, weight, urgency, and price are the factors that determine the class of mail best suited for your mailpieces.

This module discusses the classes of mail, including:

- **Expedited Services**—including Express and Priority Mail
- **First-Class Mail**
- **Standard Mail**—which is subdivided into two areas: **Standard Mail**, mail designed primarily for advertising; and heavier, bulkier articles, typically **Package Services**.

Each class of mail possesses unique characteristics according to postal regulations spelled out in the *Domestic Mail Manual* (DMM). This module will give you a basic understanding of these characteristics. In turn, you will be better able to determine the proper classification of prospective mailpieces. Proper classification at the outset ensures that your initial postage estimates are correct, that your target in-home dates are accurate, and that your mailings are accepted smoothly into the postal system. This helps maintain those critical delivery windows for your advertising campaigns, billing cycles, and customer fulfillment, and brings the job in on time, and on budget.

The first portion of the module deals with mailability. That is, regardless of class, is your prospective mailpiece and its contents acceptable for mailing at all?



## WHAT YOU WILL LEARN ABOUT “MAILABILITY”

Upon completion of this module, you should be able to define the following:

- **Basic packaging standards.**
- **The acceptability of “Hazardous,” “Perishable,” and “Restricted” matter.**
- **Prohibited imitations of postal markings.**
- **Nonmailable graphic matter.**



*Publication 2: "Packaging for Mailing", contains specific guidelines for the packaging of items to be mailed.*

## MAILABILITY

The first step in the classification of any mailpiece is determining whether the piece is even mailable in the first place. If a piece is nonmailable, it is prohibited from the mails. It is not possible to pay a higher rate or surcharge to have a nonmailable piece accepted. A nonmailable piece is unacceptable in the mails.

## GENERAL STANDARDS

In order to be mailable, fragile items must be packaged to withstand mail processing and transportation. Cushion and brace heavy items sufficiently to prevent damage to other mail. You may not package any item so that its contents could harm employees, equipment, or other mail. The general and specific standards governing items presented for mailing are contained in Domestic Mail Manual C010.



### DMM C010

There are a number of factors that can determine if a particular piece is mailable. The contents of the piece are a major consideration. Federal laws prohibit the USPS from carrying certain materials. Postal mailing rules are based on these legal statutes, or due to the danger presented by the material itself. The Postal Service may accept certain other items under particular circumstances, such as with special packaging and markings.

## HAZARDOUS, RESTRICTED, OR PERISHABLE MATTER

When you think of hazardous materials, you might think of explosives or toxic gases that have the potential of immediate disaster. These materials are not mailable. However, there are some hazardous materials that, if properly packaged and labeled, may be mailed safely.

Many items that you might use every day in your home, such as perfumes (**flammable liquids**), pesticides (**poisons**), fire extinguishers (**compressed gases**), and cleaning solvents (**corrosives**), may be mailable if properly prepared.

For now, it is helpful to classify matter that is nonmailable, or is mailable under certain conditions, into one of three main categories: *hazardous*, *restricted*, and *perishable*. The Postal Service defines these three categories as follows:

### Restricted Matter

Restricted matter is any matter that is not immediately harmful when it is customarily transported privately, but certain mailing restrictions have been imposed by law. Examples of restricted matter include:

- Intoxicating liquors.
- Matter emitting obnoxious odors.
- Liquids.
- Motor vehicle master keys.
- Firearms.
- Switchblade knives.

### Perishable Matter

Perishable matter is any matter that may deteriorate in the mail and thereby lose value, create a health hazard, or cause a nuisance or disturbance under ordinary mailing conditions. The Postal Service accepts some perishable matter if packaged in a specific way or if it is capable of delivery within certain time limits. Examples of perishable matter include:

- Live animals.
- Bees.
- Meat and meat products.
- Dead animals or parts of animals.
- Eggs.
- Plants and plant products.

## Hazardous Matter

Hazardous matter is any matter having a clear potential for causing harm to the mail or to persons or property involved in moving the mail. Examples of hazardous matter include:

- Explosives.
- Corrosives.
- Compressed gases.
- Radioactive materials.
- Flammable materials.
- Toxic and infectious substances.

The term hazardous materials covers a variety of items, ranging from explosives, which are almost never mailable, to radioactive, corrosives, and biological materials, which are mailable under certain conditions. These conditions may involve special packaging, markings, and in some instances written authorization.

## Packaging Hazardous Materials

The packaging of your mailpieces must meet the requirements described in DMM C010 and C023. These requirements cover containers, cushioning, closures, and reinforcement.

Cushioning must be sufficient to protect against breakage, and absorbent materials in the packaging must be sufficient to absorb the contents in case of leakage.

When you mail something, you expect it to arrive at its destination in good condition without being contaminated or destroyed by other mail that was improperly packaged and marked. Mailing authorized hazardous materials requires strict adherence to packaging requirements to protect the general public, mailers' employees, postal employees, mail processing and transportation equipment, and other mail.

## Labeling and Marking Hazardous Materials

When designing mailpieces that contain hazardous materials, legible and appropriate marking of the mailpiece becomes even more important. The names and addresses of both the mailer and addressee *must* appear on the shipping container. Use a nonsoluble ink or other material that you cannot easily rub off or smear. Both the delivery address and the return address must be large enough to be readable at arm's length.

Plainly state the contents on the outside of the parcel as required in DMM C023. The only exception is a parcel containing controlled substances, motor vehicle master keys, firearms, or switchblade knives (see DMM C021).

In almost all instances a parcel required to bear a diamond-shaped hazardous materials warning label is nonmailable. A shipper's declaration for dangerous goods is required on most hazardous material that may be sent by air transportation. The proper shipping name must appear, when appropriate, on the address side of the mailpiece.



*Publication 52; "Acceptance of Hazardous, Restricted, or Perishable Matter", offers more complete information as does Publication 14; "Restrictions on Mailing Animals, Plants, and Related Matter."*

### Hazardous Materials References

The *Domestic Mail Manual* (DMM) C021, and the *International Mail Manual* (IMM) Part 130, contain postal rules for mailing hazardous materials. You may find additional guidance in Publication 52, *Acceptance of Hazardous, Restricted, or Perishable Matter*.

Mail acceptance clerks at post offices, account representatives, and mailing requirements personnel are available to you to provide assistance in determining mailability issues surrounding potentially hazardous articles.

The Postal Service authorizes local postmasters to decide whether articles and substances other than written, printed, or graphic matter are nonmailable. Postmasters must, where appropriate, refuse to accept articles deemed nonmailable. If a determination cannot be made locally, contact your district business mail entry office or your governing Rates and Classification Service Center (RCSC).

### MAILER'S RESPONSIBILITY

Although the Postal Service tries to inform its customers about the mailability of various items, the mailer is ultimately responsible for complying with mailability regulations established by the Postal Service.

Post offices, bulk mail centers, and other postal facilities will not knowingly accept mailpieces that contain potentially hazardous materials that are not properly marked and packaged. Such mailpieces, as you can guess, pose a threat to the safety of postal employees, transportation employees, and the general public.

In addition, certain mailpieces that may be safely mailed by surface mail may become hazardous if transported by air. It is possible that with proper marking and packaging a mailpiece may conform to special air transport requirements, depending on the material.

### Caution!

Mailers may be subject to civil or criminal penalties if an item proves to be hazardous or dangerous through the mailer's noncompliance with postal or federal regulations for preparation, marking, and packaging. Be sure to consult the publications referenced in this section and be prepared to seek guidance prior to mailing any materials that may be hazardous.

### OTHER NONMAILABLE GRAPHIC MATTER

As might be expected, federal law prohibits from the mails any vile, obscene, or filthy material and matter inciting to violence. In addition, solicitations that mimic billing statements, unless accompanied by a prominent disclaimer, are nonmailable. Solicitations stating approval by the USPS or the Postmaster General, or conformance to any postal law or regulation, are also nonmailable.



**DMM C031**

**IMITATIONS OF POSTAL MARKINGS**

Postal regulations also prohibit mailpieces that bear deliberate imitations of postal markings and/or postal trademarks such as “Priority Mail.”



**DMM P022.4, G013**

An example of an allowable official marking is the election mail logo. The Postal Service authorizes the use of this logo only by election officials. Acceptable uses include absentee ballots, ballots-by-mail, and voter registration material. The use of the logo enhances the identification and ensures proper handling of this important type of official communication.

**OFFICIAL ELECTION MAIL LOGO**

Voting-related materials

**SUMMARY**

Be cautious when approached about design layouts for teaser copy that implies expedited handling, special services, or USPS approval. Consult the *Domestic Mail Manual* and your local USPS representatives prior to attempting to mail material that may be hazardous or at all questionable.

**EXERCISE 1 - 1**

Directions: Circle the best response or fill in the blank to answer the following questions. Check your answers when you have completed the exercise.

1. A switchblade knife is an example of which of the following types of matter?
  - a) hazardous
  - b) restricted
  - c) perishable
2. Explosives are usually mailable either by surface or air transportation.
  - a) true
  - b) false
3. Postal regulations require diamond-shaped warning labels on all mailpieces containing hazardous matter.
  - a) true
  - b) false

### ANSWERS TO EXERCISE 1 - 1

1. b, restricted; the mailing of such devices is highly restricted.
2. b, false; explosives, such as fireworks, are never mailable.
3. b, false; If a diamond-shaped warning labels is required, the article is nonmailable in almost all instances.

**T**he purpose of this portion of the module is to introduce you to the Postal Service's expedited products: Express Mail and Priority Mail. We will discuss the characteristics that make these products unique, and the service features associated with each.



### WHAT YOU WILL LEARN ABOUT EXPEDITED SERVICES

Upon completion of this portion of the module, you should be able to do the following:

- Describe what Express Mail consists of.
- Distinguish Express Mail and Priority Mail from other classes of mail.
- Describe the different Express Mail services and postage rates.
- Discuss mailpiece characteristics and preparation requirements for using Express Mail or Priority Mail.
- State the weight and size restrictions applicable to Express and Priority Mail.
- Describe the authorizations for Express Mail mailings and the payment of postage for those mailings.
- Describe procedures for forwarding and return of Express and Priority Mail.



### WHAT IS EXPRESS MAIL?

Express Mail is the U.S. Postal Service's premium service. It is the quickest way to mail an article using the U.S. Postal Service. It provides reliable expedited mail delivery on the same day, overnight, or on the second day. Delivery service is 7 days a week, 365 days a year. It is the only class of mail for which the Postal Service guarantees a delivery time.

Express Mail service is available to every address in the United States and to many foreign countries. DMM M500, E500, and D500 contain the regulations governing Express Mail. Express Mail International Service regulations and rates are in the *International Mail Manual (IMM)*, a separate publication.

You may send any article that is mailable and conforms to size and packaging requirements of this class of service via Express Mail. The Postal Service provides a mailing receipt, and an optional return receipt service is available for a fee.

Express Mail service includes insurance at no extra cost. Additional merchandise insurance may be available, depending on the value and the nature of the item. Reasonable costs for document reconstruction are also covered. See DMM S010 for procedures for filing claims.

### EXPRESS MAIL SERVICE OPTIONS

There are five types of domestic Express Mail service as well as Express Mail International Service (DMM E500):

#### Express Mail Same Day Airport Service

Same Day Airport Service is available between designated Airport Mail Facilities (AMFs). The mailpiece is available for pickup by the addressee upon arrival at the destinating AMF. [Note: This service is currently suspended for reasons of aviation security.]

### Express Mail Next Day Service

Each local post office uses an Express Mail Service Directory showing localities qualifying for next day delivery and the deadline acceptance times for Express Mail Next Day Service. If Next Day Service is available for a given destination, the mailpiece may be sent Post Office to Post Office. In this case, the addressee picks up the piece at the destinating post office. Or you may use Post Office to Addressee Service, where the mail is delivered to the addressee the following day.

### Express Mail Second Day Service

Localities not listed in the Express Mail Next Day Service Directory receive Express Mail Second Day Service. If you miss the cutoff acceptance time for next day delivery to listed locations, you may also use the Second Day Service option. As in Next Day Service, you can choose to send the article either Post Office to Post Office or Post Office to Addressee.

### Express Mail Custom Designed Service

If a company has a regular need for Express Mail, it may enter into a service agreement with the Postal Service. The service agreement specifies the times and frequency of postal pickup and delivery. This pickup service is available from designated post offices and is subject to the standards in DMM D010. The Postal Service charges the required pickup fee to the customer whenever it provides pickup service.

### Express Mail Military Service

The Postal Service provides two or three day service to and from designated postal facilities serving designated Army Post Office/Fleet Post Office (APO/FPO) addresses. Localities and acceptance times are listed in the Express Mail Military Service Directories.

## EXPRESS MAIL DROP SHIPMENT

You may use Express Mail Next Day Service or Express Mail Custom Designed Service to expedite movement of any other class of mail from one domestic postal facility to another. Called Express Mail drop shipment, this service provides for Express Mail treatment of mail from the originating to the destinating postal facility.

After receipt at the destinating postal facility, the Express Mail pouches are opened. The enclosed mail receives the appropriate handling for its class (for example, Periodicals or Standard Mail) from the destinating postal facility to the mail's ultimate destination. More information is in DMM D070, E070, and M072.

## EXPRESS MAIL RESHIP SERVICE

Express Mail Reship Service requires a service agreement. This agreement allows the Postal Service to collect mail addressed to a post office box and send it to another address by Express Mail at a scheduled frequency. For example, suppose you have rented a post office box in Los Angeles for the purpose of collecting business reply mail postcards. You may arrange to have the contents of the post office box sent to you via Express Mail at your place of business in another state using Express Mail Reship Service. More information is in DMM D500.

## SERVICE GUARANTEE

If your Express Mail piece does not meet the guaranteed delivery time, the Postal Service will refund postage, unless one of the following conditions applies :

- An incorrect ZIP Code or address was written in the delivery address block.
- Delivery was attempted, but not accomplished, within the specified time (i.e., no one was available to sign for the article).
- Forwarding or return service was provided after the article was made available for claim.
- A delay was caused by non-USPS strikes or work stoppages.
- The piece was detained for the purposes of law enforcement.

See DMM D500 for a complete description of postage refund for each type of Express Mail.

## WEIGHT AND SIZE LIMITATIONS

A piece of Express Mail may not weigh more than 70 pounds. In addition, it may not measure more than 108 inches in combined length (the longest side of a package) and girth (the measurement around the thickest part of a package).

Different restrictions may apply to Express Mail Military Service addressed to APOs or FPOs, and to Express Mail International Service.

Required labels and indicia must always appear on a single optical plane (for example, both must appear on the same side of a six-sided box, or on one side of a flat-rate envelope).



*Express Mail Reship Service can help manage float time and more accurately predict mail flow for centralized billing processing. It also helps ensure a local identity for returning mail.*

### RATES

Except for Custom Designed Service, postage is charged for each piece according to weight and service option. If the Postal Service makes a special scheduled pickup of your Express Mail, there is an additional flat fee for the stop. The number of pieces picked up does not affect the flat fee. For rates and additional fees, see *Domestic Mail Manual* R500 or Notice 123, *Ratefold*.



#### Notice 123, *Ratefold*

### Express Mail Flat-Rate Envelope

A flat-rate envelope is available from the Postal Service. Any amount of material that fits in the special flat-rate envelope may be mailed at the 2-pound rate. The 2-pound rate applies regardless of the weight of the material placed in the flat-rate envelope.

### AUTHORIZATION AND FEES

No prior authorizations are needed to use Express Mail, except Express Mail Custom Designed Service, which requires a service agreement in advance.

### POSTAGE PAYMENT

You may pay postage by adhesive stamps, meter stamps, or by an Express Mail Corporate Account. Most post offices accept payment by Visa, MasterCard, or Discover credit cards. You may also use COD service, where the mailer is reimbursed for the price of the shipment and the cost of the postage by the recipient.

In accordance with the limitations in DMM P500, you may use meter stamps to prepay reply postage (covered in module eight) on Express Mail shipments. You may also use a Manifest Mailing System (MMS) with written authorization and an Express Mail Corporate Account.

### Express Mail Corporate Account

The Express Mail Corporate Account (EMCA) allows you to pay for Express Mail postage by advance deposit, without having to apply postage to each individual piece. You use your unique corporate account number in lieu of postage at the time of mailing. You must file Form 5639, *Express Mail Corporate Account Application*, along with a deposit, to open an Express Mail Corporate Account (see DMM P500). Contact your postmaster or local Postal Business Center for more information.

### ENVELOPE MARKINGS AND ENDORSEMENTS

The Postal Service handles Express Mail internally in distinctive envelopes, cardboard containers, and sacks. This distinctive equipment ensures that Express Mail receives the highest priority handling of all classes of mail. Shipping containers include:

- Overnighter Envelope for letters and documents
- 2-Pound Pack for letters and small documents
- Overnighter Box for heavier items
- Overnighter Tube for drawings, maps, and blueprints
- Flat-Rate Envelope (must be used to obtain special flat rate, as explained in DMM E500)

For each item, you must complete the appropriate Express Mail label, depending on the service offering selected. The Postal Service furnishes these labels, which are self-adhesive, multipart forms. Express Mail labels are also available in pin-feed formats for ease of use with computer printers. EMCA holders may receive preprinted labels at no extra charge.

Items that cannot be containerized or sacked (such as a pair of skis) must have the appropriate Express Mail label securely attached and be clearly identified as Express Mail.

You may use Form 3877, *Firm Mailing Book For Accountable Mail* for Express Mail if you customarily mail three or more articles at one time. Form 3877 provides the mailer with a receipt.

## POSTAL HANDLING OF UNDELIVERABLE MAILPIECES

The Postal Service forwards Express Mail at no additional charge for 1 year from the date of an address change filing, if the new address is known.

If undeliverable or unclaimed, Express Mail is held for 5 days before it is returned (as Express Mail) at no additional charge to the sender. You may specify return in less than 5 days by providing instructions on the label in the space under the return address.

If Express Mail cannot be delivered due to an incorrect or incomplete address, the Postal Service will attempt to locate the correct address by using a city or telephone directory. Mailers may request specific handling by using an ancillary service endorsement. Ancillary service endorsements are covered in module four: *Addressing*.

## EXPRESS MAIL INTERNATIONAL SERVICE

Reliable expedited delivery, usually taking 1 to 3 days, is available to nearly 200 countries. The *International Mail Manual* identifies which countries accept Express Mail International. Frequent overseas mailers often enter into a service agreement with the USPS and use the Custom Designed Service option. See the *International Mail Manual* for more information.

## WHAT IS PRIORITY MAIL?

Priority Mail is the Postal Service's product for correspondence, marketing materials, and merchandise that is urgent, but does not require next day service. Priority Mail is an economical expedited product with a delivery standard of 2 to 3 days.

Any mailable matter may be sent as Priority Mail. There are no special restrictions for additions or enclosures. There is no minimum weight for Priority Mail. However, the Postal Service's current rate structure requires any First-Class Mail matter weighing more than 13 ounces to be mailed at Priority Mail rates.

## SERVICE GUARANTEE

Within the Postal Service's domestic delivery system, Priority Mail receives special attention through separate, dedicated, distribution centers, transportation, and sortation operations.

While the Postal Service makes every attempt to meet published service standards, there is no delivery guarantee for Priority Mail.

## WEIGHT AND SIZE LIMITATIONS

The maximum weight for Priority Mail is 70 pounds. Priority Mail mailpieces may be no more than 108 inches in combined length and girth.

The exception to the rule is for Priority Mail parcels originating in the 48 contiguous states and destinating at APOs or FPOs, where the weight limit is 15 pounds and the size limit is 60 inches in combined length and girth. (see DMM E010).



The unique Priority Mail logo and markings can provide an additional impact to a well targeted marketing campaign.

## RATES

Priority Mail offers special, unzoned rates anywhere in the country for packages up to 5 pounds. Saturday delivery is included at no extra charge. The Postal Service makes no distinction between residential and business deliveries.

For a complete listing of Priority Mail postage rates, refer to Notice 123, *Ratefold* or to *Domestic Mail Manual* R100.8.



### Notice 123, *Ratefold*

## Flat-Rate Envelope

A special flat-rate envelope is offered for Priority Mail, similar to the Express Mail flat-rate envelope discussed previously, which may contain any amount of material that can fit in the special flat-rate envelope (this envelope is available only from the Postal Service). Postage for a flat-rate envelope is equal to the rate for a 2-pound piece charged at the single-piece Priority Mail rate, regardless of the weight of the material placed in the envelope.

## AUTHORIZATION AND FEES

No prior authorizations other than those associated with a particular payment option are required to use Priority Mail. The Postal Service does charge a nominal fee for pickup service; however, any number of pieces may be picked up.

## POSTAGE PAYMENT

You can pay Priority Mail postage by:

- meter stamps.
- permit imprint
- adhesive postage stamps (including a special Priority Mail stamp).

Using a meter strip for payment of single-piece rate is preferable to using stamps, but both are acceptable.

## ENVELOPE MARKINGS AND ENDORSEMENTS

The Postal Service also handles Priority Mail internally in distinctive envelopes, cardboard containers, and sacks. To ensure proper handling, each piece of Priority Mail must be marked with the words “Priority” or “Priority Mail” as required in DMM M120.

The Postal Service provides a number of packaging options, including boxes and envelopes free of charge. For high volume shippers, customized and personalized packaging is available. To learn more, contact the USPS account representative assigned to your company.

## POSTAL HANDLING OF UNDELIVERABLE MAILPIECES

The Postal Service forwards Priority Mail at no additional charge for 1 year from the date of an address change filing, if the new address is known. After one year, the piece will be returned at no charge with the new address attached.

If undeliverable or unclaimed, Priority Mail is returned at no additional charge to the sender. Mailers may request specific handling by using an ancillary service endorsement. Ancillary service endorsements are covered in module four; *Addressing*.

**EXERCISE 1 - 2**

Directions: Circle the best response or fill in the blank to answer the following questions. Check your answers when you have completed the exercise.

1. The Postal Service will refund the postage cost if it fails to meet the guaranteed delivery time for domestic Express Mail.  
a) true  
b) false
2. Express Mail Next Day Service may be sent as Post Office to Addressee or Post Office to \_\_\_\_\_ Service.
3. For Express Mail, there is an additional charge for insurance against loss, damage, or rifling.  
a) true  
b) false
4. For Express Mail, there is an additional charge if the Postal Service makes a special pickup of the mailpieces.  
a) true  
b) false
5. Express Mail articles may not weigh more than \_\_\_\_\_ pounds.
6. Postage for Express Mail may be paid by adhesive stamps, meter stamps, or an Express Mail \_\_\_\_\_ Account.
7. All First-Class Mail matter weighing more than \_\_\_\_\_ ounces must be sent as Priority Mail.
8. The maximum allowable length and girth for an Express Mail or Priority Mail mailpiece is \_\_\_\_\_ inches.
9. The Postal Service offers unzoned rates, anywhere in the country, for Priority Mail packages weighing up to \_\_\_\_\_ pounds.
10. The marking "Priority" or "Priority Mail" must appear on the address side of each piece of Priority Mail.  
a) true  
b) false

### ANSWERS TO EXERCISE 1 - 2

1. **a, true;** the postal service offers a postage refund for Express Mail pieces that do not meet the delivery guarantee.
2. **Post Office;** under this option, the recipient typically makes arrangements to pick up the mailpiece at their local post office.
3. **b, false;** Express Mail includes insurance at no additional cost. Extra merchandise insurance is also available, depending on the article to be mailed.
4. **a, true;** a nominal fee is charged for a scheduled Express Mail or Priority Mail pickup.
5. **70;** 70 pounds is the maximum weight for all mailable items.
6. **Corporate;** The Express Mail Corporate Account (EMCA) is a payment option available only for Express Mail.
7. **13;** matter weighing more than 13 ounces and required to be mailed as First-Class Mail must be sent at Priority Mail rates. Mailable matter weighing 13 ounces or less may be sent as Priority Mail at the mailer's option.
8. **108;** except for Parcel Post, 108 inches combined length and girth is the maximum size allowable for a mailpiece of any class.
9. **5;** the postal zone is not necessary to calculate the postage for Priority Mail pieces weighing 5 pounds or less.
10. **a, true;** both Express Mail and Priority Mail mailpieces must be properly identified.

**T**he purpose of this portion of the module is to show you how to distinguish First-Class Mail from other classes of mail, and to discuss the required mailpiece characteristics and procedures for mailing at First-Class Mail rates.



### **WHAT YOU WILL LEARN ABOUT FIRST-CLASS MAIL**

Upon completion of this portion of the module, you should be able to do the following:

- Identify the characteristics of First-Class Mail.
- Distinguish among the various types of First-Class Mail and First-Class Mail postage rates.
- State the weight and size restrictions applicable to First-Class Mail.
- Describe the fees, authorizations, permits, and licenses necessary to enter Presorted First-Class Mail mailings at a business mail entry unit.
- Define the “Move Update” requirement for Presorted First-Class Mail.
- Describe First-Class Mail envelope markings and endorsements, and their design specifications.



### WHAT IS FIRST-CLASS MAIL?

Virtually anything that is mailable may be sent as First-Class Mail. However, since First-Class Mail is frequently transported by airplane, articles that may damage or interfere with aircraft are prohibited (see DMM C021).

Under current law, certain items must be mailed as First-Class Mail:

- Typewritten or written matter (except for allowable additions to Periodicals, Standard Mail, and Package Services).
- Matter closed against postal inspection.
- Personal correspondence.
- Bills and statements of account.
- Stamped cards.
- Postcards that bear handwritten or typewritten additions.
- Business reply mail (BRM).

You may not mail these types of material as Standard Mail, Package Services or Periodicals. Under certain conditions, however, they may be added to Standard Mail, Package Services, or Periodicals as allowable enclosures.

### SERVICE GUARANTEE

While the Postal Service makes every attempt to meet published service standards, there is no delivery guarantee for First-Class Mail.

### WEIGHT AND SIZE LIMITATIONS

As a maximum size limit, the combined length and girth (explained in module three; *Processing Categories*) may not exceed 108 inches.

First-Class Mail may not weigh more than 70 pounds. Priority Mail is a subclass of First-Class Mail and includes mail weighing more than 13 ounces. Mail weighing 13 ounces or less may be sent as Priority Mail at the discretion of the mailer.

### RATES

Rates for single-piece, cards, presort, and automation First-Class Mail are contained in DMM R100. You will find the fees required to enter mail at various presort rates, the non-standard surcharge, and the address correction service fee in DMM R100 as well.



#### DMM R100

### Stamped Cards and Postcards

Stamped cards provided by the Postal Service, and privately produced postcards, are designed to be mailed at a special card rate. Postcards must fall within certain minimum and maximum dimensions including height, length, and thickness. We will cover these requirements in detail in module three; *Processing Categories*.

### Single-Piece First-Class Mail

Single-piece First-Class Mail consists of First-Class Mail matter weighing 13 ounces or less, mailed at the full First-Class rates of postage. Single-piece letter rates are determined by weight in one-ounce increments. Fractions of an ounce are always rounded up to the next higher rate.

### Presorted First-Class Mail

Presorted First-Class Mail is mail presented in a manner that preserves the orientation and ZIP Code sequence of the pieces. Mailers present these pieces at one post office as part of a single mailing of at least 500 pieces, each weighing 13 ounces or less. All pieces must be within the same processing category and all pieces must be individually addressed.

The mailer must presort the mailpieces to the maximum extent possible (specific methods of presorting are explained in DMM M130). Publication 95, *Quick Service Guide*, gives a good overview of the presort requirements for all discounted preparation options.



#### PUB 95: QSG 130

Many mailers use presort software to automate the sortation of their mailings. The Postal Service certifies presorting software under the Presort Accuracy Validation and Evaluation (PAVE) program. Software vendors voluntarily submit their presorting programs to have them PAVE certified.

Although the Postal Service does not require the use of PAVE-certified software, it does require sortation documentation in certain cases. Mailers may either produce this documentation by PAVE-certified software, or present the documentation in a standardized format.

### Automation Rates

Automation rates are available for First-Class Mail letters and cards compatible with barcode sorter processing. Prebarcoded flat-size pieces must be either FSM 881 or FSM 1000 compatible.

Each mailing must be presorted and consist of at least 500 pieces. Letter-size and card-size mailpieces must bear the correct delivery point barcode to be eligible for the automation rate as described in DMM E140.

Each address in the mailing must be from a list that has undergone the ZIP+4 matching process using Coding Accuracy Support System (CASS) certified software. This software process must occur within 6

months of the mailing date. A list of currently certified programs and vendors is available from a postal business center, by calling 1-800-238-3150, or by visiting our website @ <http://www.usps.com>.

Flat-size First-Class Mail may use either the correct delivery point barcode or the correct ZIP+4 (9-digit) barcode to qualify for automation rates, but identical CASS requirements apply in either case.

One hundred percent of the total pieces in each automation rate mailing must bear a CASS-certified ZIP+4 or delivery point barcode for the address on the mailpiece. Mailers must present all First-Class Mail automation mailings in trays.

### Optional Carrier Route Rate

The Postal Service offers an optional automated carrier route rate for First-Class Mail. These rates apply to letter-size pieces that are part of a group of 10 or more pieces sorted to the same carrier route, rural route, highway contract route, post office box section, or general delivery unit.

You must present these pieces at one post office as part of a single mailing of not less than 500 pieces. Carrier route and City State File information must be updated within 90 days before the mailing date.

The carrier route automation First-Class Mail rates are available only in 5-digit ZIP Code areas named in the City State File as designated for manual processing. Flat-size First-Class Mail pieces are not eligible for these automation carrier route rates.

**!** *All Green Diamond Bordered envelopes are charged First-Class Mail rates, regardless of content or contrary mailer endorsements.*

## AUTHORIZATION AND FEES

Mailers must pay an annual Presort First-Class Mail mailing fee at each post office where they enter mail. Payment of this fee allows them to enter both their own and their clients' mail at the Presorted First-Class rates and at any automation rate.

## POSTAGE PAYMENT

You may pay postage for presorted First-Class mailings by postage meter, permit imprint, and precanceled stamps.

A postage statement must always accompany any presorted First-Class Mail mailing:

- PS Form 3600-R, Postage Statement—First-Class Mail—Permit Imprint, is used for mailings paid by permit imprint.
- PS Form 3600-P, Postage Statement—First-Class Mail—Meter or Precanceled Postage Affixed, is used for mailings paid by postage meter or precanceled stamps.
- PS Form 3600-EZ, First-Class Mail—Easy-Nonautomation Letters, Cards, or Flats—Permit Imprint, is used for nonautomated noncarrier route mailings paid by permit imprint.

Both of these forms may be filled out manually by the mailer or be computer-generated (with prior authorization).

## ENVELOPE MARKINGS AND ENDORSEMENTS

All pieces in a Presorted First-Class nonautomation rate mailing must be printed or stamped "First-Class." You must print the basic required class marking either as part of, or directly below or to the left of the postage payment indication.

Other required markings such as "Presorted" must be included either:

- With the basic class marking.
- As part of the postage payment indication (i.e., permit imprint, meter stamp, precanceled stamp).
- As part of the precanceled stamp.
- As part of the address block, on the optional endorsement line, one or preferably two lines above the delivery address.

## Green Diamond-Bordered Envelope

Only First-Class Mail envelopes are allowed to bear the distinctive "Green Diamond-Bordered" design. When printed on letter-size mail, the border must not enter the OCR read area or barcode clear zone unless a delivery point barcode appears in the address block (as described in module six; *Automation Requirements*).

## Single-piece First-Class Mail

Most single-piece rate First-Class Mail does not require class markings on each piece. However, single-piece rate residual pieces tendered as part of a presorted mailing may be required to be marked "Single-Piece" or "SNGLP."

## Automation Mail

In addition to the basic class marking, all pieces in an automation rate First-Class Mail mailing must be printed or stamped "Presorted," "PRSRT," or "AUTO" in any of the locations previously listed. The Postal Service does not require the "AUTO" endorsement if the mailpieces are barcoded in the address block. Automation rate mailings not marked auto must include at least the "Presorted" or "PRSRT" rate marking.

## Automation Carrier Route First-Class Mail

Carrier route automation rate First-Class Mail mailings (letter-size only) must be marked "AUTOOCR" in addition to the basic class marking.

## POSTAL HANDLING OF UNDELIVERABLE MAILPIECES

The Postal Service forwards First-Class Mail at no additional charge for 1 year from the date of an address change filing, if the new address is known. After 1 year, the piece will be returned at no charge with the new address attached.

If undeliverable or unclaimed, First-Class Mail is returned at no additional charge to the sender. Mailers may request specific handling by using an ancillary service endorsement. Ancillary service endorsements are covered in module four, *Addressing*.

**MOVE UPDATE REQUIREMENT**

Mailers who claim presort or automation rates for First-Class Mail must demonstrate they have updated the addresses in their mailing lists within 180 days or 6 months prior to the date of the mailing. The Postal Service wants to ensure that it does not have to rehandle mailpieces that it has already granted mailing discounts to. There are four primary USPS-approved updating methods:

1. Address Change Service (ACS).
2. National Change of Address (NCOA) service.
3. *FASTforward<sup>SM</sup>*
4. Ancillary Service Endorsements.

The Postal Service makes these options available to meet the needs of mailers at a reasonable expense. Each mailer needs to analyze which option or combination best fits their mailing needs.

For additional information concerning a specific updating method or the move update requirement, call the National Customer Support Center (NCSC) at 1-800-238-3150.

**EXERCISE 1 - 3**

Directions: Circle the best response or fill in the blank to answer the following questions. Check your answers when you have completed the exercise.

1. Which of the following is not required by law to be mailed as either First-Class Mail or Express Mail?
  - a) personal correspondence
  - b) a bill or statement of account
  - c) an advertising circular
  - d) matter intended to be closed to postal inspection
2. A Presorted First-Class Mail mailing consists of a minimum of \_\_\_\_\_ pieces.
3. Letter-and card-size mailpieces must bear a \_\_\_\_\_ point barcode to be eligible for prebarcoded rates.
4. Addresses in an automation mailing must be matched to the ZIP+4 national database using \_\_\_\_\_ certified matching software within \_\_\_\_\_ months before mailing.
5. You must pay an annual mailing fee prior to depositing discounted First-Class mailings with the Postal Service.
  - a) true
  - b) false
6. Only First-Class Mail may bear the distinctive red diamond-bordered design.
  - a) true
  - b) false
7. All discounted First-Class Mail mailpieces must be marked "Auto."
  - a) true
  - b) false
8. Full-rate, single-piece, First-Class Mail mailpieces must be marked "First-Class."
  - a) true
  - b) false

### ANSWERS TO EXERCISE 1 - 3

1. **c, an advertising circular**; mass produced, identical items like an advertising brochure are not required to be mailed as First-Class Mail.
2. **500**; this is the minimum number of pieces required to make a discounted First-Class mailing.
3. **delivery**; a delivery point barcode is required on letter-size mailpieces at the automation rates.
4. **CASS, 6**; Coding Accuracy Support System (CASS) certified software must be used every 6 months to derive the ZIP+4 information encoded in a qualifying barcode for automation rates.
5. **a, true**; mailers submitting discounted First-Class mailings must pay the First-Class Presort fee at each office of mailing once every 12 months.
6. **b, false**; only First-Class Mail mailpieces may bear the green diamond-bordered design. Borders of other colors (such as red) may be used on mailpieces of any class.
7. **b, false**; at a minimum, all presorted, discounted, First-Class Mail mailpieces must be marked "First-Class." Pieces may or may not be required to be marked "Auto," depending on the barcode placement and use of the "Presorted" marking.
8. **b, false**; there is no required marking for full-rate, single-piece, First-Class Mail.

**T**he purpose of this portion of the module is to show you how to distinguish Standard Mail from other classes of mail, and discuss the required mailpiece characteristics and procedures for mailing at Standard Mail rates.



### **WHAT YOU WILL LEARN ABOUT STANDARD MAIL**

Upon completion of this portion of the module, you should be able to do the following:

- Define Standard Mail.
- Distinguish among the various Standard Mail rates, including Regular, Nonprofit, and Enhanced Carrier Route Standard Mail and automation discount rates.
- State weight and size restrictions applicable to Standard Mail.
- Describe the fees, authorizations, and licenses necessary for Standard Mail mailings.
- Describe required envelope markings, authorized enclosures, and endorsements for Standard Mail.

## WHAT IS STANDARD MAIL?

Standard Mail consists of mailable matter weighing less than 16 ounces (DMM E611 and E612) that is not mailed or required to be mailed as First-Class Mail and not entered as Periodicals mail.

Standard Mail may be opened for postal inspection, and must be of a non-personal nature. The following articles qualify as Standard Mail:

- Printed matter such as the following:
  - Circulars.
  - Flyers.
  - Catalogs.
  - Booklets.
  - Rebate checks endorsed “Pay to the Addressee” or “Pay to Bearer.”
  - Some personalized computer-prepared material (per DMM E612.2.3).
- Lightweight merchandise under 16 ounces, such as:
  - Plants.
  - Seeds or bulbs.
  - Product samples.

## SERVICE GUARANTEE

Standard Mail may receive deferred service. The Postal Service does not guarantee delivery within a specified time period.

## WEIGHT AND SIZE LIMITATIONS

Qualifying Standard Mail mailpieces must be less than 16 ounces. This imposes an effective size limitation due to the necessary weight of the packaging and contents.

## RATES

Standard Mail is now a subclass consisting entirely of presorted, discounted rate offerings. There is no Standard Mail single-piece rate.

## Presorted Standard Mail

To qualify for presort rates, each mailing must consist of at least 200 pieces or 50 pounds of individually addressed pieces. Mailers must properly prepare, presort, package, label, and tray (letter mail) or sack (flats) these mailings for presort discounts. Packaging, labeling, tray, and sacking requirements for the various presort levels are discussed in DMM M610.

The *Domestic Mail Manual* Eligibility module lists the qualifications for the available Standard Mail rates:

### Letters:

- Regular Standard Mail (DMM E620).
- Enhanced Carrier Route Standard Mail (DMM E630).
- Nonprofit Standard Mail (DMM E670).

### Nonletters (Flats and Small Parcels):

- Regular Standard Mail (DMM E620).
- Enhanced Carrier Route Standard Mail (DMM E630).
- Nonprofit Standard Mail (DMM E670).

### Automation Rates:

- Regular Standard Mail (DMM E640).
- Enhanced Carrier Route Standard Mail (DMM E640).
- Nonprofit Standard Mail (DMM E640).

A minimum per piece rate applies to Enhanced Carrier Route rate pieces weighing 3.3 ounces or less and Regular Standard Mail nonautomation and automation rate pieces weighing 3.3 ounces or less.

For the minimum per piece rates (the minimum postage paid for each piece), the Postal Service categorizes mail as either “letters” or “other than letters” (nonletters) based on the size standards in DMM C050. For automation rates, mail is assigned to the “nonletter” category based on the automation-compatible standards in DMM C820.

Pieces exceeding the weight limits stated above are subject to a two-part, piece/pound rate that includes a fixed charge per piece and a variable pound charge based on weight. The basic postage rate applies to pieces meeting the minimum preparation standards.

Many mailers use presort software to automate the sortation of their mailings. The Postal Service certifies presorting software under the Presort Accuracy Validation and Evaluation (PAVE) program. Software vendors voluntarily submit their presorting programs to have them PAVE-certified.

Usually, presorted mailings must be accompanied by sortation reports printed by Presort Accuracy Validation and Evaluation (PAVE) certified software. Alternatively, this documentation may be printed in a standardized format.

### Automation Rates

Automation rates are available for Standard Mail (A) letters compatible with barcode sorter processing. Prebarcoded flat-size pieces must be either FSM 881 or FSM 1000 compatible.

Each mailing must be presorted and consist of at least 200 pieces or 50 pounds. Letter-size mailpieces must bear the correct delivery point barcode to be eligible for the prebarcoded rate.

Each address must be from a list that has undergone the ZIP+4 matching process using

Coding Accuracy Support System (CASS) certified software. This software process must occur within 6 months of the mailing date. A list of currently certified programs and vendors is available from a postal business center, by calling 1-800-238-3150, or by visiting our website @ <http://www.usps.com>.

Flat-size mail may use either the correct delivery point barcode or the correct ZIP+4 (9-digit) barcode to qualify for automation rates, but identical CASS requirements apply in either case.

One hundred percent of the total pieces in each automation rate mailing must bear a CASS-certified ZIP+4 or delivery point barcode for the address on the mailpiece. Mailers must present all Standard Mail letter-size automation mailings in trays. You must sack flat-size mailings.

### Enhanced Carrier Route Rate

Ten or more pieces of Standard Mail sorted to the individual carrier route is known as Enhanced Carrier Route Standard Mail. This preparation method bypasses Postal Service processing equipment so that whole packages travel directly to a specific postal carrier for delivery.

There are four different ECR rates and preparation options:

1. Basic.
2. High Density.
3. Saturation.
4. Automation.

The eligibility and preparation requirements for the basic, high density, and saturation ECR rates can be found in DMM E630 and M620. The requirements for automation ECR rates are in DMM E640 and M810.





**Publication 417; "Nonprofit Standard Mail Eligibility"** is available from your local Business Mail Entry office or postmaster.

Mailers are responsible for the proper make-up of mail for Enhanced Carrier Route Standard Mail. You must update the carrier route information within 90 days of mailing.

Carrier route codes must be applied to mailings using Coding Accuracy Support System (CASS) certified address matching software and the current USPS Carrier Route Information System (CRIS) scheme or other approved method (DMM E630.1.4).

## Destination Entry Rates

In addition to presort rate discounts, Standard Mail may also qualify for destination rate discounts. Destination entry rate discounted mailings must be prepared in accordance with DMM E650 and deposited at the corresponding destination postal facility. DMM P950 describes the plant-verified drop shipment (PVDS) postage payment option for destination rate mailings. Only one of these destination entry reductions may be claimed for each mailpiece (DMM E650.1.1).

- DBMC (destination *bulk mail center*).
- DSCF (destination *sectional center facility*).
- DDU (destination *delivery unit*).

## AUTHORIZATION AND FEES

An annual mailing fee (DMM R600) must be paid every 12 months at each post office of mailing. Depending on your choice of postage payment method, an additional fee may be required to enter the mail of your clients as well.

## NONPROFIT STANDARD MAIL

Qualified nonprofit organizations are those that are not organized for profit and with none of their net income benefiting any private stockholder or individual.

To mail at Nonprofit Standard Mail rates, you must receive authorization from the Postal Service. Proof of nonprofit status (except for qualified political committees), must be provided by the organization when applying for authorization to mail at the Nonprofit Standard Mail rates.

The following types of organizations may be qualified to use Nonprofit Standard Mail (DMM E670):

- Religious.
- Educational.
- Scientific.
- Philanthropic.
- Agricultural.
- Labor.
- Veterans.
- Fraternal.
- Qualified political committees.
- Voting registration officials.

Nonprofit Standard Mail is subject to the same requirements and restrictions as regular Standard Mail. In addition, there are many requirements that are unique to Nonprofit Standard Mail.

The Postal Service requires a separate nonprofit rate authorization at each entry post office. An organization may not delegate or lend the use of its nonprofit rate authorization to any other person or organization. The name and return address of the authorized nonprofit organization must appear either on the outside of the mailpiece or in a prominent location on the material being mailed.

Mailings at the Nonprofit Standard Mail rates may not contain advertising for credit, debit, or charge cards or similar financial instruments. There are restrictions for advertising insurance and travel arrangements as well. Other types of advertising (generally advertising related to the purpose of the organization) are allowed under certain conditions. See Publication 417, *Nonprofit Standard Mail Eligibility*, for more details.

Cooperative mailings may be made only when each of the cooperating organizations is individually authorized to mail at Nonprofit Standard Mail rates at the post office where the mailing is deposited.

## POSTAGE PAYMENT

The postage rate that must be paid is either the minimum per piece rate or the piece/pound rate, as reduced in either case by any discounts for which the piece is eligible.

You may pay postage for presorted Standard Mail mailings by postage meter, permit imprint, or precanceled stamps. A postage statement must always accompany any presorted Standard Mail mailing, including:

- *Regular Form 3602-PR, Postage Statement—Standard Mail—Postage Affixed.*
- *Regular Form 3602-R, Postage Statement—Standard Mail—Permit Imprint.*
- *Nonprofit Form 3602-PN, Postage Statement—Standard Mail—Postage Affixed.*
- *Nonprofit Form 3602-N, Postage Statement—Standard Mail—Permit Imprint.*
- *Nonprofit Form 3602-NZ, Nonprofit Standard Mail—Easy—Nonautomation Letters or Flats—Permit Imprint.*

Any of these forms may be filled out manually by the mailer or computer-generated (with prior authorization).

## ENVELOPE MARKINGS AND ENDORSEMENTS

Each piece of nonautomation bulk Standard Mail must be printed or rubber-stamped with the basic rate and class marking "Presorted Standard" or "PRSRT STD." Qualifying

mailings at the nonprofit rates must instead be marked "Nonprofit Organization," "Nonprofit Org," or "Nonprofit." These basic rate markings must be printed either as part of, or immediately adjacent to, the permit imprint, precanceled stamp, or meter stamp.

In addition to the above markings, pieces entered at Enhanced Carrier Route Standard Mail rate must be identified with an "ECRLOT," "ECRWSH," or "ECRWSS" as part of the permit imprint, or it may be printed or rubber-stamped above the address in the area to the left or below the permit imprint, meter stamp, or precanceled stamp. Another choice is to place these additional rate markings in the address area on either the line above the address or, preferably, two lines above the address.

## Automation Mail

In addition to the basic class marking, all pieces in an automation rate mailing must be printed or stamped "AUTO" in any of the locations previously listed. The Postal Service does not require the "AUTO" endorsement if the mailpieces are barcoded in the address block.

## POSTAL HANDLING OF UNDELIVERABLE MAILPIECES

No forwarding or return services are provided for bulk rate Standard Mail without a mailer's endorsement. Undeliverable, unendorsed Standard Mail is treated as waste. Mailers may request specific handling by using an ancillary service endorsement. Ancillary service endorsements are covered in module four, *Addressing*.

**!** *Tax exempt nonprofit status with the IRS, is not the same as a Nonprofit authorization with the USPS. Prior to printing their mailpieces, be sure that a mailer who states that they are "non-profit", is actually authorized by the USPS.*

### ENCLOSURES

As defined in DMM E610.4.1, some attachments and enclosures may be included with Standard Mail. For example, an invoice, if it relates only to the matter with which it is mailed, may be enclosed or attached in an envelope marked "Invoice Enclosed." Instructions or directions for the use of the item mailed may also be enclosed or attached.

### Incidental First-Class Mail

Incidental First-Class Mail matter may be enclosed in or attached to Standard Mail merchandise (including books but excluding samples) or any Package Services mailpiece without payment of First-Class postage.

To qualify as "incidental," the enclosure must:

- Be closely related to the piece to which it is attached.
- Be secondary to that piece.
- Not interfere with postal processing.

Examples of incidental enclosures include the following:

- A bill for the product or publication.
- A statement of account for past products or publications.
- A personal message or greeting included with a product or publication.

### Nonincidental First-Class Mail

Nonincidental First-Class Mail may be attached to or enclosed in pieces of Standard Mail merchandise (excluding merchandise samples). Additional postage at the First-Class Mail rate must be applied to the outside of the mailpiece; it can be added to the Standard Mail postage or affixed separately. The mailer must write, stamp, print, or typewrite the endorsement "First-Class Mail Enclosed" on the mailpiece above the address and below the postage.

**EXERCISE 1 - 4**

Directions: Circle the best response or fill in the blank to answer the following questions. Check your answers when you have completed the exercise.

1. Standard Mail must weigh less than \_\_\_\_\_ ounces.
2. All matter mailed at Standard Mail rates must be \_\_\_\_\_ personal in nature.
3. Which of the following articles may not be mailed at Standard Mail rates?
  - a) merchandise
  - b) booklets
  - c) flyers
  - d) bill for goods or services
4. Each Standard Mail presorted mailing must consist of a minimum of \_\_\_\_\_ pieces or \_\_\_\_\_ pounds.
5. The name of the authorized nonprofit mailer must appear prominently on the outside of any mailpiece mailed at the nonprofit rates of postage.
  - a) true
  - b) false
6. A nonprofit organization may make joint mailings at the Standard Mail nonprofit rates, at their discretion, with other unauthorized entities.
  - a) true
  - b) false
7. Nonprofit mailings are subject to content-based restrictions for:
  - a) editorial content
  - b) advertising
  - c) punctuation
  - d) none of the above
8. A presorted Standard Mail mailing fee must be paid every \_\_\_\_\_ months.
9. The endorsement " \_\_\_\_\_ " must appear on every piece of presorted regular Standard Mail either as part of, or immediately next to, the postage area.

### ANSWERS TO EXERCISE 1 - 4

1. **16**; Standard Mail matter weighing 16 ounces or more must be sent as Package Services.
2. **non**; personalized material is required to be sent at First-Class Mail rates.
3. **d, bill for goods or services**; by definition, a bill must be mailed as First-Class Mail. However, a bill for merchandise may be sent with the merchandise at the Standard Mail rates as an incidental enclosure.
4. **200, 50**; are the minimum volume requirements for a discounted, presorted Standard Mail mailing.
5. **b, false**; the name of the authorized nonprofit organization must appear either prominently on the inside of the piece or on the outside. It is not required to always appear on the outside of the mailpiece. However, if the piece bears any name and return address, it must be that of the authorized organization.
6. **b, false**; an authorized nonprofit cannot share with, or loan their authorization to, another organization. Multiple authorized organizations however, may participate in a joint mailing, under certain conditions.
7. **b, advertising**; some specific types of advertising are prohibited. Other advertising is allowed, however, under certain conditions.
8. **12**; this is an annual mailing fee.
9. **"Presorted Standard" or "PRSRT STD"**; all regular rate Standard Mail pieces are required to have a basic rate marking. Qualifying nonprofit mailpieces must be marked: "Nonprofit Organization," "Nonprofit Org.," or simply "Nonprofit."

**T**he purpose of this portion of the module is to show you how to distinguish Package Services from other classes of mail, and discuss the required mailpiece characteristics and procedures for mailing at Package Services rates.



### **WHAT YOU WILL LEARN ABOUT PACKAGE SERVICES**

Upon completion of this portion of the module, you should be able to do the following:

- Define Package Services.
- Distinguish among the various Package Services subclasses and rates including regular and special rates and presort discount rates.
- State the weight and size restrictions applicable to Package Services.
- Describe the fees, authorizations, and permits necessary for mailing Package Services mailings, as well as the payment of postage for those mailings.
- Describe required markings, authorized enclosures, and endorsements for Package Services.



Contact your local postmaster or mailing requirements office for the official Zone Chart for your originating post office. This listing will also define your local Intra service area by 3-digit ZIP Code prefix.

## WHAT IS PACKAGE SERVICES?

Package Services consists of merchandise, printed matter, mailable live animals, and other articles that are not required to be mailed as other classes of mail. Package Services includes a number of subclasses, each with its own unique characteristics and rate structure.

## SERVICE GUARANTEE

Package Services may receive deferred service. Although the Postal Service has established delivery standards for Package Services, it does not guarantee delivery by a specific date.

## WEIGHT AND SIZE LIMITATIONS

There is no minimum weight requirement for Package Services..

Generally, Package Services mailpieces may be no heavier than 70 pounds nor greater than 108 inches in length and girth combined. Mailpieces sent as Parcel Post, however, may reach up to 130 inches in combined length and girth. Bound Printed Matter may weigh no more than 15 pounds.

## PARCEL POST RATES

You may mail any Package Services matter at Parcel Post rates, subject to the basic standards. Parcel Post rates are determined by weight (in 1-pound increments with fractions always rounded up to the heavier weight), zone (geographic destination), and machinability. Parcel Post mailpieces mailed at the applicable "Oversized" rate may reach a maximum of 130 inches in length and girth.

## Inter-BMC (Bulk Mail Center) rates for machinable parcels

Inter BMC machinable rates apply to articles which weigh 35 pounds or less and are otherwise machinable. These articles must originate within the service area of a Bulk Mail Center (BMC) or Auxiliary Service Facility (ASF) and destinate outside that area.

## Inter-BMC rates for nonmachinable parcels

Inter-BMC rates for nonmachinable parcels (with the nonmachinable surcharge included) apply to articles which weigh more than 35 pounds or are otherwise nonmachinable. These articles must originate within the service area of a BMC or ASF and destinate outside that area. (Machinable criteria is covered in module three; Processing Categories.)

## Intra-BMC rates for all parcels

Intra-BMC rates apply to both machinable and nonmachinable articles which originate and destinate for delivery within the same service area of a BMC or ASF. This rate also applies to parcels originating and destinating within Alaska, Hawaii, and Puerto Rico.

## ZONE CHARTS



The Postal Explorer CD contains a Zone Chart reference. Use this function to determine the appropriate zone from your origin ZIP Code.

### Presorted Parcel Post

USPS regulations include two presort options for Parcel Post. These options are:

1. **Origin Bulk Mail Center (OBMC) presort.**  
OBMC presort rates apply to both machinable and nonmachinable parcels sorted to either BMCs or ASFs. To qualify for these discounts, mailings must be presented at a BMC.
2. **Bulk Mail Center (BMC) presort.**  
BMC presorted parcels are entered at any postal facility other than a BMC.

Mailings prepared under either presort option must consist of at least 50 pieces of Parcel Post. For further information, including a complete description of the sortation requirements for these options, see DMM M710 and Publication 95, *Quick Service Guide*.

### Parcel Select Rates

Like Standard Mail, Package Services Parcel Post also qualifies for destination rate discounts. These discounts include three different rates:

1. DBMC (destination bulk mail center).
2. DSCF (destination sectional center facility).
3. DDU (destination delivery unit).

DSCF and DDU rate discounted mailings must be part of a mailing of 50 or more pieces sorted to 5-digit ZIP Codes using pallets or sacks. Contact your local postal representatives for further information.

### BOUND PRINTED MATTER RATES

The Bound Printed Matter subclass:

- Weighs no more than 15 pounds.
- Consists of 90% printed sheets (not including handwriting or typewriting).
- Is advertising, promotional, directory, or editorial matter in any combination.
- Is securely bound by permanent fastening such as staples, spiral binding, glue, or stitching.

This matter may not be stationery, such as blank pads or printed forms, or have the nature of personal correspondence.

### Single-Piece rates

Single-piece Bound Printed Matter rates are determined by weight and zone. See Notice 123, *Ratefold* for a complete listing of all Package Services rates.



### Notice 123, *Ratefold*

### Presorted Bound Printed Matter

Presorted Bound Printed Matter rates are applicable to mailings of 300 or more pieces of identical weight and size (see DMM E630 for exceptions). Postage is determined by zone (geographic destination) and includes both a per piece and a per pound charge. There are two bulk Bound Printed Matter rates: a basic rate and a carrier route rate (see DMM R700).



### MEDIA MAIL RATES

Books, films, sound and video recordings, printed music, manuscripts, and printed educational reference charts and test materials are among the articles that may be mailed as Media Mail (see DMM E713).

Postage for articles mailed at Media Mail rates is determined by weight without regard to geographic zone. In addition to single-piece rates, there are two levels of presort.

### Presorted Media Mail

The Presorted Media Mail 5-digit rate applies to mailings of at least 500 properly prepared pieces presorted to 5-digit ZIP Code locations. The Presorted Media Mail BMC rate applies to mailings of at least 500 properly prepared pieces presorted to Bulk Mail Centers. The size and content of each piece need not be identical when qualifying for either presort rate (see DMM E713.3).

### LIBRARY MAIL RATES

Books, sound recordings, printed music, and museum materials are among the articles that may be sent at the Library Mail rate, but only by mailers specified in DMM E714.2.

The Library Mail rate is essentially reserved for the exchange of items between schools, libraries, museums, and certain

nonprofit organizations. Postage for these articles is determined by weight in one pound increments without regard to geographic zone.

### Presorted Library Mail

The Postal Service includes provisions for presorting Library Mail to qualify for 5-digit and BMC presorted rates. The requirements and the rates for this option are the same as those for presorted Media Mail.

### AUTOMATION RATES

The Postal Service offers automation rates for BMC-processed machinable parcels bearing mailer applied 5-digit ZIP Code or ZIP+4 parcel barcodes. To qualify, pieces must be part of a mailing of at least 50 pieces of any Package Services subclass.

The barcoded discount is available for all machinable parcels at Package Services rates except for:

- Parcel Post mail entered at DSCF entry rates or DDU entry rates.
- Parcel Post DBMC rate mail entered at an ASF other than the Phoenix, AZ, ASF.
- Bound Printed Matter at the carrier route rates.
- Library Mail at the 5-digit presort rates.

This course provides additional information on parcel barcode discounts in modules five and six.

## AUTHORIZATION AND FEES

An annual mailing fee must be paid every 12 months for each subclass that you desire to mail at discounted rates. This fee must be paid at each post office of mailing. For instance, mailers of Presorted Media Mail rates must pay a mailing fee every 12 months at each office of mailing.

All discount options for the particular subclass are covered by a single fee per subclass. The USPS does offer pickup service for single-piece rate Parcel Post mail. There is a separate fee, per pickup, for this service.

## POSTAGE PAYMENT

Postage for Package Services single-piece rate is typically paid by either permit imprint or meter stamp. Postage for Package Services mailings that require a minimum mailing quantity or presort must be paid with meter stamps or permit imprints.

The correct postage statement must always accompany any presorted Package Services mailing, including:

- Form 3605-BR, *Postage Statement—Bound Printed Matter—Permit Imprint*
- Form 3605-BP, *Postage Statement—Bound Printed Matter—Postage Affixed*
- Form 3605-PP, *Postage Statement—Parcel Post—Postage Affixed*
- Form 3605-PR, *Postage Statement—Parcel Post—Permit Imprint*
- Form 3608-R, *Postage Statement—Media Mail or Library Mail—Permit Imprint*
- Form 3608-P, *Postage Statement—Media Mail or Library Mail—Meter Postage Affixed*
- Form 3605-DBR, *Destination Entry Bound Printed Matter—Permit Imprint*
- Form 3605-DBP, *Destination Entry Bound Printed Matter—Postage Affixed*
- Form 3605-SR, *Parcel Select—Permit Imprint*
- Form 3605-SP, *Parcel Select—Postage Affixed*

## ENVELOPE MARKINGS, ENDORSEMENTS, AND ENCLOSURES

The required subclass markings must appear in the postage area on each mailpiece. Pieces not clearly marked as required are treated as single-piece Parcel Post and are subject to additional postage as necessary.

Certain written additions and enclosures are allowed to accompany Package Services without the payment of additional postage. Permissible additions and enclosures applicable to all Package Services are described in DMM E710. Other written additions or enclosures may be permitted for specific types of Package Services.

### Parcel Post

All Parcel Post must bear the subclass marking “Parcel Post” or “PP.” This marking must appear as part of the permit imprint, or above the address and to the left or below the permit imprint.

In addition, mailings submitted for DSCF, DDU, and DBMC entry rates must also be marked “Drop Ship” or “D/S” or “Parcel Select.” or both. If “Parcel Select” is shown in the postage area, then no other marking is required. The marking may appear either in the postage area or in the line above, or two lines above the address as described in DMM M012.

In addition to the authorized written additions and enclosures described in DMM E610, any printed matter mailable as Standard Mail may be attached or enclosed.

### Bound Printed Matter

Each piece claimed at single-piece Bound Printed Matter rates must be marked “Bound Printed Matter” or “BPM.” This marking must also appear in the postage area on the mailpiece. Each piece claimed at presorted Bound Printed Matter rates must also have a “Presorted” or “PRSRT” marking in addition to the basic subclass.



*Correct rate markings are critical to the USPS's rate setting process. As such, they are a key requirement for acceptance at the Business Mail Entry Unit. Check with your local postal officials if you are unsure of the proper rate and class markings.*

Carrier route Bound Printed Matter must show the proper subclass marking and the rate marking “Carrier Route Presort” or “CAR-RT SORT.” The CAR-RT SORT marking must appear either in the postage area or in the line above, or two lines above the delivery address. Additional authorized enclosures or attachments for bulk Bound Printed Matter include order forms, reply cards or envelopes, any printed matter mailable as Standard Mail, and incidental samples of merchandise.

## Media Mail

The words “Special Standard” must appear on each piece mailed at the single-piece rate either as part of the permit indicia or above the address and below or to the left of the postage. You must add the “Presorted” endorsement or “PRSRT” abbreviation to each piece mailed at that rate.

Additional enclosures or attachments authorized for Media Mail include one order form, a reply card or envelope, and incidental announcements of new books.

## Library Mail

Each piece of Library Mail must be marked “Library Rate” or “Library Mail” in the postage area. Presorted Library mail must also bear the required “Presorted” or “PRSRT” markings.

Permissible enclosures for books and sound recordings mailed at the Library Mail rate include one envelope or addressed postcard, one order form, and incidental announcements of books (when mailed with books) or sound recordings (when mailed with sound recordings).

## POSTAL HANDLING OF UNDELIVERABLE MAILPIECES

Unless otherwise endorsed, undeliverable Package Services except for BPM, will be forwarded locally (defined as the same single-ZIP Code or multi-ZIP Coded post office) for one year at no additional charge.

Nonlocal forwarding for one year will be provided for an additional charge. If the period for forwarding has expired, the Postal Service will return the article to the sender and charge the appropriate return postage (see DMM F010).

Mailers may request specific handling by using an ancillary service endorsement. Ancillary service endorsements are covered in module four; *Addressing*.

Bound Printed Matter with no ancillary service endorsement and no special service is disposed of by the Postal Service. It is neither forwarded nor returned to the sender. BPM bearing a special services endorsement without an ancillary service endorsement is treated as “Forwarding Service Requested.” (DMM F010.5.4).

## SUMMARY

While complex, the proper classification of your mailpiece is necessary for a satisfying mailing experience. Knowing the correct class of your prospective mailpiece allows you to more accurately estimate postage costs and delivery times. Proper classification ensures no unexpected surprises or delays during postal acceptance and verification at the Business Mail Entry Unit. Seek expert assistance if you are at all unsure.



*Postal classification “experts” can be found among your District’s Business Mail Entry (BME) staff and at the governing Rates and Classification Service Center (RCSC).*

**EXERCISE 1 - 5**

Directions: Circle the best response or fill in the blank to answer the following questions. Check your answers when you have completed the exercise.

1. Which of the following may be mailed as Package Services?
  - a) personal correspondence
  - b) a bill for services
  - c) merchandise
  - d) matter sealed against postal inspection
2. The maximum length and girth for Package Services articles is 108 inches, except for the \_\_\_\_\_ subclass, which has a maximum of \_\_\_\_\_ inches.
3. Intra-BMC (as opposed to Inter-BMC) Parcel Post rates apply when the article is mailed from the service area of a BMC or ASF and is intended for delivery within the same \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Bound Printed Matter rates apply to certain pieces that weigh no more than \_\_\_\_\_ pound(s).
5. Mailpieces that qualify for Bound Printed Matter must consist of at least 90 percent \_\_\_\_\_ sheets, not blank pads or forms, that are permanently \_\_\_\_\_ together.
6. Presorted Bound Printed Matter may be mailed at a basic rate, a barcoded rate, or a \_\_\_\_\_ rate.
7. Which of the following entities may not normally mail at the Library Mail rate?
  - a) museums
  - b) savings and loan institutions
  - c) private universities
  - d) nonprofit organizations
8. To enjoy the Package Services discounted, presorted rates, you must pay an annual fee for each \_\_\_\_\_ you wish to mail.
9. Each piece of Package Services must be marked: "Package Services."
  - a) true
  - b) false

### ANSWERS TO EXERCISE 1 - 5

1. **c, merchandise**; of these choices, only merchandise may be sent as Package Services. First-Class Mail matter such as bills and invoices, directly relating to the qualifying material may be included at the Package Services rates as an incidental attachment or enclosure.
2. **Parcel Post, 130**; only Parcel Post may exceed the 108 inches maximum length and girth.
3. **service area**; Intra is “within” the service area of a BMC or ASF, Inter is “without” or “between.”
4. **15**; fifteen pounds is the maximum for a qualifying Bound Printed Matter mailpiece.
5. **printed, bound**; Bound Printed Matter rates are not intended to apply to pads of stationery, printed forms, or blank pages.
6. **Carrier Route**; The Bound Printed Matter subclass also includes a Carrier Route presort option.
7. **b, savings and loan institutions**; they are a business, not an organization targeted to receive these special rates.
8. **subclass**; each subclass requires its own annual fee. However, that fee entitles you to all available discount options for that subclass.
9. **b, false**; each piece of Package Services mail must bear the basic rate marking for the subclass (e.g., Parcel Post or Bound Printed Matter).

**T**he Periodicals mail classification is relatively unique when compared to the other classes of mail:

- Periodicals are subject to distinct and strict content and construction requirements.
- Periodicals mail may not be paid for by the traditional postage payment methods available to the other classes of mail.
- There is a more involved application and approval process, including postal review of publisher's records.
- Authorized Periodicals mailers must inform and notify the Postal Service of any changes in title, frequency, and location of the known office of publication.

For this reason, we are presenting the classification of Periodicals mail as a separate module of the self-study course. You will not typically have to help a mailer classify a Periodicals mailpiece. Due to the inherent requirements, mailers will know whether or not their mailpiece is an authorized Periodicals publication. The purpose of this module is to illustrate some of the unique requirements of Periodicals mail. This will allow you to be more familiar with the issues encountered by any of your clients who might already be mailing authorized Periodicals publications.



## WHAT YOU WILL LEARN ABOUT PERIODICALS MAIL

Upon completion of this portion of the module, you should be able to do the following:

- Describe in general what defines Periodicals mail.
- Distinguish among the various Periodicals rates, including regular and preferred rates.
- Describe the fees and authorizations necessary for Periodicals mailings and the payment of postage for those mailings.

### WHAT IS PERIODICALS MAIL?

Periodicals mail consists of newspapers and periodical publications, including magazines, published on a regular basis, at least four times per year.

Only publications that meet the eligibility standards in Domestic Mail Manual E212 can qualify for Periodicals mailing privileges. To be eligible, a publication must fulfill specific qualification standards and meet the preparation requirements for the applicable presort levels, rates, and discounts.

### Basic Characteristics

All authorized Periodicals publications must have the following characteristics:

- The publication must exhibit continuity from issue to issue (it is the same publication).
- The primary purpose of the publication is the transmission of information. It may not be designed primarily for advertising purposes.
- The publication must be issued at a specific, regular frequency. This frequency must be at least four times a year, with the intent to continue publishing indefinitely.
- The publication is formed of printed sheets.
- The publisher maintains a known office of publication from which the business of the publication is transacted. This location must be accessible during normal business hours and must be where the circulation records are maintained, or where they may be made available for examination and review.

### SERVICE GUARANTEE

The Postal Service does not guarantee the delivery of Periodicals within a specified time period; however, they are given expeditious distribution, dispatch, transit, and delivery as far as practicable.

### WEIGHT AND SIZE LIMITATIONS

General regulations governing the minimum and maximum size standards and appropriate mail processing category apply equally to Periodicals mailings. The Postal Service encourages publishers to fold publications, when practicable, to a size no larger than 11 3/4 by 14 1/2 inches. Do not roll publications.

### AUTHORIZATION CATEGORIES

In addition to the general requirements for Periodicals mailing privileges as previously summarized (see DMM E211), authorized publications must meet the specific requirements of one of five qualification categories.

#### 1) General Publications

General publications must be published for the purpose of disseminating information of a public character or be devoted to literature, the sciences, art, or some special industry. In addition, a general publication must:

- Have at least 50 percent of a general publication's distribution be to persons who have paid or promised to pay, for a subscription, that is, for copies to be received during a stated period of time. The subscription price must be at a rate above a nominal rate. The publisher must maintain a list of legitimate subscribers. This list must be available for postal review upon request.
- Not exceed 75 percent advertising in more than half of the issues published in a 12-month period.

## 2) Publications of Eligible Institutions and Societies

Postal regulations subdivide publications of institutions and societies into two groups:

1. Publications that are authorized to carry only the publisher's own advertising.
2. Publications authorized to carry general advertising.

Publishers Own Advertising. Publications authorized in this subcategory may contain only the publisher's own advertising and not the advertising of other persons or organizations. Under these circumstances, the USPS considers all circulated copies as subscriber copies. The total number of all such copies is the total paid circulation. The kinds of publications restricted to publisher's own advertising under this category include those published by:

- Nonprofit institutions of learning or any public or nonprofit private elementary or secondary school or by a state school supported in whole or in part by public taxation.
- Bulletins published by state boards of health, state industrial development agencies, state conservation or fish and game agencies, or by state boards or departments of public charities or corrections qualify for this category.
- Certain educational radio or television stations.

General Advertising. Publications authorized to carry general advertising under this subcategory must limit their mailed circulation to:

- Members who pay as part of their dues (or separately) at least 50 percent of the publication's actual regular subscription price.
- Other actual paid subscribers.
- Exchange copies.
- A maximum of 10 percent sample or nonsubscriber copies.

The kinds of publications eligible to carry general advertising under this standard include:

- Fraternal societies.
- Trade unions.
- Professional, literary, historical, or scientific societies.
- Churches and church organizations.





*In essence, a requester publication cannot be what is typically known in the publishing industry as a "House Organ."*

## 3) Requester Publications

Publications authorized under this category do not require a list of paid subscribers. Rather, the copies are distributed to individuals who specifically request the receipt of the publication.

Requester publications must not be owned or controlled by a concern that produces the publication essentially for the advancement of the main business or calling of those who own or control it.

In addition, authorized requester publications must meet the following criteria:

- Each issue must contain at least 24 pages.
- No issue may contain more than 75 percent advertising.
- The publication must have a legitimate list of persons requesting the publication. At least 50 percent of the distribution must be to these "requesters."

## 4) Publications of State Departments of Agriculture

These publications qualify for Periodicals rates if they further the objectives of the department and do not contain any advertising matter.

## 5) Foreign Publications

Publications from foreign countries, having the same general character as authorized domestic Periodicals publications, may qualify for Periodicals rates. The Postal Service bases its review of foreign applications solely on the circulation in the United States. The known office of publication may be the office of the publisher's United States agent.

## News Agent Authorization

News agent registry is a type of authorization granted to a person or concern that sells two or more already authorized Periodicals publications published by more than one publisher. The Postal Service must authorize a news agent before the agent may mail Periodicals publications at the Periodicals mail rates.

## PERIODICALS QUALIFICATION CATEGORIES

Qualification Category	DMM Reference	Type of Advertising Permitted
General	DMM E212	general
Institutions and Societies	DMM E212	publisher's own or general*
State Departments of Agriculture	DMM E212	none
Requester	DMM E212	general
Foreign	DMM E212	general

\* Depends on the type of institutions and societies authorization.

## RATES

Periodicals rates are among the lowest offered to mailers. Only publishers and registered news agents may mail at these rates. The USPS bases the postage charges for Periodicals matter on a complex combination of per pound charges, per piece charges, and piece charge adjustments for nonadvertising matter and intra-SCF pieces. The Postal Service determines the postage charged for a mailing by applying the applicable per pound rates, per piece rates, minus the applicable adjustments.

### Regular Rates

There is a standard (unzoned) per pound rate for the *nonadvertising* portion of a publication. For the *advertising* portion, rates are broken into pound increments and zone charges, which vary with geographical location. Per piece rates reflect different levels of presort and automation or nonautomation mail.

### Preferred Rates

- In-County Rates apply to subscribers' copies of any issue of a Periodicals publication (except a requester publication) when they are entered within the county of publication, for delivery within that county, if either of the following conditions are met:
- The total paid circulation of such issue is less than 10,000 copies;  
or
- The number of paid copies distributed within the county is at least one more than 50 percent of the total paid circulation. The total number of nonsubscriber copies mailed at in-county rates during any calendar year may not exceed 10 percent of the number of subscribers' copies mailed at those rates.

- The preferred rate discount is available to certain qualifying nonprofit organizations that are not organized for profit and have none of their net income accruing to any private stockholder or individual. (See DMM E270 for specific eligibility requirements.) Publishers must obtain prior authorization before claiming the discount.
- Authorized classroom (DMM E270) publications that are religious, educational, or scientific publications designed specifically for use in classrooms are eligible for the preferred rates.
- Science-of-Agriculture Rates are available to outside-county copies of Periodicals publications devoted to promoting science of agriculture. Seventy percent of the total number of copies must be distributed during any 12-month period to subscribers living in rural areas. This rate is not available for requester publications.

Domestic Mail Manual E270 and R200 list the eligibility requirements and postage amounts, respectively, for Periodicals preferred rates.



### DMM E250, R200

### Destination Entry Rates

In addition to presort rate discounts, Periodicals mail may also qualify for destination rate discounts. Mailers must deposit destination entry rate discounted mailings at the corresponding destination postal facility. Periodicals mail may qualify for SCF (sectional center facility) and delivery unit rates and discounts..

### AUTHORIZATION AND FEES

The Postal Service requires payment of a nonrefundable fee for all Periodicals applications requesting original entry, additional entry, reentry, and news agent registry. See DMM R200 for current fee amounts.

The only exception is a reentry application requesting the nonprofit rate, which does not require payment of a fee. The nonrefundable fees cover the Postal Service administrative costs for processing each application.

### Application

To request authorization for Periodicals mailing privileges, a publisher must file the appropriate application at the post office serving the known office of publication.

The application used for requesting Periodicals mailing privileges or changing conditions of a Periodicals authorization is Form 3500, *Application for Periodicals Mailing Privileges*.

### Original Entry

The original entry is the post office that serves the location of the publisher's known office of publication. Approval of the application allows the publisher to mail at Periodicals rates at the original entry post office.

### Mailing in Pending Status

While a Periodicals application for original entry is pending, a publisher may mail copies of the publication under the conditions prescribed in DMM E213. The publication is charged postage at the applicable First-Class Mail or Standard Mail rates while an application is pending.

The Postal Service keeps a record of all deposits and mailings when postage at the applicable Standard Mail rates or regular printed matter international rates is paid with an advance deposit account. No record is kept of postage paid at the First-Class Mail rates or for postage not paid through an advance deposit account.

Upon approval of a Periodicals application, the publisher receives a refund that equals the difference between the postage charged for mailed copies and the actual Periodicals mail rates for those same copies. This refund amount is held in trust in the advance deposit account during the pending period.

No refunds are given if, while in pending status, the postage was not paid through an advance deposit account. Refunds are also not given when postage has been paid with stamps, or at the First-Class Mail rates. See DMM E213 for more information on refunds for pending publications.

### Additional Entry

An additional entry under DMM D230 is a post office, other than the original entry office, where a publisher may also present copies of a Periodicals publication for postal acceptance and verification. Postage is paid at this additional entry office, except for publications authorized under the Centralized Postage Payment (CPP) system.

The publisher initiates the establishment, cancellation, or modification of an additional entry by submitting Form 3510 to the original entry post office. The application must detail the distribution plan (volume and ZIP Code ranges) justifying the addition or cancellation of the entry point.

Two copies of the most recent issue containing an amended identification statement or a representation of what the amended identification statement will look like must accompany the application.

Applications are required to be submitted at least 30 days before the requested effective date.

Once the Postal Service approves an additional entry, mailers must deposit a mailing at each additional entry site at least once each calendar year. Otherwise, the additional entry authorization will be canceled, and the mailer must reapply.

### Reentry

Form 3510 must also be submitted whenever a publisher requests a change in the title, frequency of issue, or location of the known office of publication of an authorized Periodicals publication.

The form must be accompanied by two copies of the publication. These copies must contain a complete amended identification statement. Alternatively, the publisher may

supply a proof copy of the identification statement along with specification of the issue in which it will appear.

A publisher must apply for changes in title or frequency at the original entry post office; a change in known office of publication must be submitted to the *new* original entry post office. A publisher must submit Form 3510 to change the category under which a publication is authorized.

### POSTAGE PAYMENT

Payment must normally be made through an advance deposit account established at the post office of mailing. Mailers must pay the Standard Mail or Package Services rates, by adhesive stamps, meter stamps, or permit imprint, on copies that do not qualify for the Periodicals rates.

### Postage Statements

A postage statement must be submitted with the first mailing of each issue of a Periodicals publication. Under specific standards, the Postal Service may authorize the submission of a monthly postage statement.

Compute periodicals postage on Form 3541, *Postage Statement—Periodicals One Issue or One Edition*.

### Centralized Postage Payment (CPP) System

The Centralized Postage Payment system (CPP) allows the publisher to pay postage, by advance deposit account, at the New York Rates and Classification Service Center (RCSC) instead of at each additional entry office. Publishers who are able to meet the specific CPP standards may apply to the New York RCSC for authorization.

### ENCLOSURES

Postage on nonincidental First-Class Mail matter and Standard Mail attachments and enclosures also may be paid only by pre-canceled stamps, meter stamps, or permit imprint.

Enclosures in Periodicals publications are handled as follows:

- Nonpermissible Enclosures  
Nonpermissible enclosures (ineligible for Periodicals rates) included with the mailed copies of a Periodicals publication are subject to postage at the proper First-Class or Standard Mail rate, as applicable.
- Nonincidental First-Class Mail and Standard Mail Attachments  
Postage for nonincidental First-Class Mail matter and Standard Mail attachments or enclosures included with mailed copies may be paid for under the same conditions as nonpermissible enclosures. The total weight of all Standard Mail matter may not exceed 16 ounces.
- Incidental First-Class Mail matter  
Incidental (allowable) attachments and enclosures are eligible for Periodicals rates based on the total weight of the attachments and the publication. The advertising rate is charged if the publication contains advertising.

### POSTAL HANDLING OF UNDELIVERABLE MAILPIECES

The Postal Service forwards Periodicals mail at no additional charge for 60 days from the date of an address change filing. After 60 days, or if the piece is undeliverable, the USPS provides a separate address correction or reason for nondelivery.

The Postal Service charges the current address correction fee for the notification. The actual piece is disposed of by the USPS. Mailers may request the return of the mailpiece by using the appropriate ancillary service endorsement. Pieces will be returned at the applicable First-Class Mail or Priority Mail single-piece rates.

**EXERCISE 2 - 1**

Directions: Circle the best response or fill in the blank to answer the following questions. Check your answers when you have completed the exercise.

1. You must publish a Periodicals publication on a regular frequency, at least \_\_\_\_\_ times a year.
2. A publication that is designed primarily to advertise may qualify for Periodicals mail rates.
  - a) true
  - b) false
3. Postal regulations for publications of institutions and societies divide these publications into those authorized to carry either "publisher's own" or "general" \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Each issue must contain at least 24 pages, and no issue may contain more than 75 percent advertising. This statement is true for which category of Periodicals:
  - a) general publications
  - b) publications of institutions and societies
  - c) publications of state departments of agriculture
  - d) requester publications
5. The "original entry office" is the post office which serves the publisher's "known \_\_\_\_\_ of publication."
6. A publisher must complete and submit a Form 3510 to the Postal Service for which of the following changes to an authorized Periodicals publication?
  - a) reentry after a break in stated frequency of issue
  - b) application for additional entry post office
  - c) a name change
  - d) all of the above
7. Which of the following rate categories is *not* a Preferred Periodicals rate?
  - a) in-County
  - b) destination SCF
  - c) classroom
  - d) nonprofit
8. After approval, the publisher may apply for a postage refund for the difference between Periodicals postage and the First-Class Mail rates paid while the application was pending.
  - a) true
  - b) false

### ANSWERS TO EXERCISE 2 - 1

1. **4**; Periodicals publications must be published at least quarterly.
2. **b, false**; in order to be approved, a qualifying Periodicals publication must not be designed primarily to advertise.
3. **advertising**; publishers of publications from institutions and societies restricted to their own advertising include: nonprofit or public institutions of learning, state boards of health, and some public radio and television stations.
4. **d, requester publications**; this limitation ensures that requester publications must maintain a meaningful editorial content.
5. **office**; the “known office of publication” is the physical location where a publisher conducts normal business, and where the publisher’s subscriber records are kept, or can be made available for review.
6. **d, all of the above**; all of these changes must be authorized by filing a Form 3510.
7. **b, destination SCF**; is an entry rate. It is available to all Periodicals mailers and is not a preferred or special rate
8. **b, false**; refunds are never given for pending Periodicals publications mailed at the First-Class Mail rates.

**T**he purpose of this portion of the module is to introduce you to the unique marking and construction requirements for Periodicals Mail. These features help to make the Periodicals class of mail distinct from other classes. Due to the inherent nature of the Postal Service's automated processing equipment, however, design characteristics for automation compatibility are the same for Periodicals as for all other classes. These requirements will be covered in later modules.



### WHAT YOU WILL LEARN ABOUT PERIODICALS MAIL

Upon completion of this portion of the module, you should be able to do the following:

- Describe in general the construction requirements applicable to Periodicals Mail.
- Describe the indication of postage payment for those mailings.
- Describe required envelope markings, authorized enclosures, and endorsements for Periodicals.



## IDENTIFICATION OF PERIODICALS

Postal regulations require that authorized Periodicals publications be prominently identified with the authorized title.

### Publication Title

You must show the publication title of a Periodicals publication on the front or cover page. The position, type style and type size must be easily distinguishable from all other printed matter on the cover.

### Identification Statement

An identification statement (DMM E211), in easily read type, must appear in all copies of authorized Periodicals publications and in all copies under a pending status. Unless otherwise noted, you must include the following items in the ID statement:

- Publication title and number: The publication title must be displayed. If assigned, an International Standard Serial Number (ISSN) must be used. Otherwise, the number assigned by the Postal Service must be displayed. As an alternative, the publication number may appear on the front or cover page instead of in the identification statement.
- Date of issue: You may omit the date of the Periodicals publication issue from the ID statement *if* the issue date is displayed on the front or cover page.
- Statement of frequency: The statement of frequency must be included (see DMM E211 for format).
- Issue number: The issue number of the Periodicals publication may be omitted if it appears on the front or cover page. Consecutively number each issue of the publication.
- Subscription price: If the publication has a stated basic subscription price, that price may appear in the ID statement.
- Name and Address of Known Office of Publication: The ID statement must include the physical street address of the location where the publisher conducts the publication's business and makes available for postal review the publication's circulation records.

- Periodicals Imprint: The imprint in the ID statement must state "Periodicals Postage Paid at ...(insert: original entry post office)." If the publication is mailed at two or more offices, via additional entries, the imprint must read "Periodicals Postage Paid at ...(insert: name of original entry office) and at additional mailing offices."
- Notice of Pending Application: While a Periodicals application is pending the imprint must read "Application to Mail at Periodicals Postage Rates is Pending at...(insert: original entry post office)."
- Change of Address Orders: The publisher's mailing address for change of address orders must also appear in the ID Statement. The statement must appear in the normal text type of the publication and read "POSTMASTER: Send address changes to (insert: publication's name and mailing address)." Publications that are wrapped may use the alternative in DMM C200. Change of address information requests may also be shown on the label carrier or the containers of publications prepared in envelopes, closed wrappers, or polywraps.



*A complete and properly located ID Statement is a critical acceptance issue. Ensure the correct content and location prior to printing.*

## Location

The placement of an ID statement differs, depending on whether the publication is bound or unbound. For both types, the ID statement may be shown on one of the first five pages, or in the masthead of the editorial page. The masthead location is allowable if the location of the editorial page is referred to in the table of contents on the front page of the publication.

The ID statement in a bound publication may also be on one of the last three editorial pages inside the back cover.

The ID statement in an unbound publication may appear on the table of contents page.

page may have dimensions (when folded) that exceed the dimensions of the publication.

## Bound/Unbound

Periodicals publications may be prepared in either bound or unbound format as permitted by postal standards as follows:

- A bound publication is one in which the pages are securely held together by two or more staples, spiral binding, glue, stitching, or other permanent fastening.
- All other publications are considered unbound, including folded multisheets and single sheet publications, and those in which the pages are loose and collated ("nested") or held together by one staple.

## PERMISSIBLE COMPONENTS AND CONSTRUCTION METHODS

A Periodicals publication may, under DMM C200, be made up of different components and construction methods as allowable by postal standards. The most basic component of a Periodicals publication is the page(s) which form the printed sheet(s).

## Pages

Pages are the printed sheets forming the publication that may bear advertising, nonadvertising, or both. This includes pages having textual and graphic matter, blank spaces for writing or marking, and material to be completed or used by the reader.

A minor portion of the total pages may have unusual characteristics, such as a different size, shape, or construction, or portions may be wholly or partially separable, and pages prepared for folding out. No folded

## Parts and Sections

A publisher may prepare a publication in parts or sections. Parts and sections are pages that are physically separate subdivisions of the publication.

Each part or section must show the publication title, and the number of parts or sections in the issue must be stated on the cover of the first part or section. Items that



*Construction and component regulations for Periodicals Mail are closely reviewed by Business Mail Entry Unit personnel during acceptance. Check with local acceptance personnel prior to printing if you are at all unsure of the pertinent regulations.*

are not eligible to be mailed at the Periodicals rates as permissible components may not be prepared as parts or sections.

## Supplements

A supplement is one or more printed sheets that are not bound into a publication. A supplement may be devoted to a single topic and may contain material different from that in the host publication.

The supplement may not be mailed by itself at Periodicals rates and may not bear a permit imprint. The external dimensions of a supplement may not exceed those of the host publication, except when both are completely enclosed in an envelope or polybag.

These dimensions apply to the supplement “as mailed.” Mailers may fold larger supplements so that their final external dimensions do not exceed that of the host piece.

A loose supplement to a bound Periodicals publication must contain at least 25% nonadvertising matter and bear the endorsement “Supplement to” followed by the title of the publication or the name of the publisher. A bound publication with one or more supplements must be enclosed in a mailing wrapper.

A supplement to an unbound publication may contain any amount of advertising, nonadvertising, or both. The supplement must be combined with and inserted within the publication. If the supplement is prepared loose, then the unbound publication and

supplement must be enclosed in a mailing wrapper.

## Mailing Wrappers

A mailing wrapper is an envelope sleeve, partial wrapper, or polywrap used to enclose the publication for mailing. Advertising is permitted on the mailing wrapper if it is included when measuring the issue’s advertising percentage.

All single copies of an unbound publication that include any enclosure and are mailed to an APO or FPO address must be completely enclosed in a mailing wrapper. Mailers are encouraged to place all small or flimsy publications in mailing wrappers.

Mailing wrappers that completely enclose the host publication must bear the Periodicals imprint “Periodicals Postage Paid at (insert post office of mailing),” or simply the word “Periodicals” in the upper right corner of the address area.

## Protective Covers

An additional cover may be added to the outside of the publication for added protection. This protective cover must cover both the front and back of the host publication and extend to within at least 3/4 inch of the edge opposite the fold or binding. The protective cover must be permanently attached when the host publication is bound.

The publication title must be visible through or displayed prominently on any protective cover or wrapper. Publishers may place requests for change of address information from subscribers on wrappers or envelopes.

## Sealing

Periodicals mail must be prepared so that it can be easily examined. The mailing of publications at Periodicals rates represents the publisher’s consent to postal inspection of the contents.

## IMPERMISSIBLE COMPONENTS

Although they may accompany Periodicals publications under certain conditions, the following materials are never eligible for Periodicals rates:

- Materials bearing a separate subscription price or different subscription instructions than the host publication.
- Matter bearing the word “Catalog.”
- Material with a First-Class Mail, Standard Mail or Package Services permit imprint.
- Matter bearing an International Standard Book Number (ISBN).
- Matter bearing an ISSN or USPS number different from that of the host publication.
- Any products, including wall, desk, and blank calendars. Calendars consisting of printed pages are not considered products so long as they are not offered for sale.
- Any Package Services material.

The complete text of the pertinent regulations governing proper construction of Periodicals mailpieces is contained in DMM C200.



### DMM C200

## ENCLOSURES

Enclosures submitted with a qualifying Periodicals host publication are considered either incidental to the host piece, or nonincidental. Incidental First-Class Mail enclosures are charged Periodicals rates along with the host piece. Nonincidental enclosures must have separate postage paid.

## Incidental Enclosures

Allowable incidental enclosures in a Periodicals publication include:

- A receipt, request, or order form for a subscription to the host publication, other Periodicals publications of the publisher, or Periodicals publications of affiliates or subsidiaries of the publisher. (DMM C200.1.4).
- A reply form for the addressee to provide new address information to the publisher.
- First-Class Mail matter that is closely related, but secondary to, the Periodicals publication. Examples of proper incidental First-Class Mail enclosures are a bill for the publication, a statement of account for past publication purchases, or a personal message or greeting.

## Nonincidental Enclosures

Nonincidental First-Class Mail and Standard Mail enclosures are permitted with Periodicals publications if the applicable First-Class Mail or Standard Mail rates are paid. Postage may be placed on the enclosure itself with precanceled or meter stamps, or on the outside of the Periodicals mailpiece with precanceled stamps, meter stamps, or permit imprint.

A permit imprint used to pay postage on a nonincidental enclosure must not normally be visible when mailed. As an alternative, publishers may include the permit imprint indicia and required markings in the publication's identification statement.

The marking “First-Class Mail Enclosed” or “Standard Mail Enclosed,” as appropriate, must be placed either on the outside of the host publication or in the ID statement. This statement must not normally appear on issues that do not include an enclosure.

While enclosures are normally bound into bound publications, DMM C200 lists conditions for loose enclosures in bound publications.

## ATTACHMENTS

Any of the materials permitted as loose enclosures in a Periodicals publication may be attached to a page, cover, protective cover, or wrapper.

## ADVERTISING

Advertising in a Periodicals publication (discussed in the preceding section) is restricted or prohibited as specified for each of the five periodicals qualification categories listed in DMM E212.

For postal purposes, the term advertising includes all material for which a valuable consideration is paid, accepted, or promised, that calls attention to something to get people to buy it, sell it, seek it, or support it.

Publishers must prepare all advertisements as an integral part of a Periodicals publication. You may print advertising on the pages of any component of a publication, subject to the applicable standards.

When determining the advertising portion of an issue of a publication, all advertising must be included in the measurement except for the specific types of enclosures excluded by standard in DMM C200.

## Marking of Paid Reading Matter

Editorial or other reading matter for which payment or other valuable consideration is accepted or promised must be plainly marked “advertisement” by the publisher. If this matter occupies more than one page, only the first page need be marked “advertisement.”

## ADDRESSING

Each mailpiece must bear the addressee’s name and address, including the correct ZIP Code or ZIP+4 code. The use of a simplified address format or exceptional address format is prohibited on copies intended to count as subscriber or requester copies meeting the applicable circulation standards. Such copies may be mailed as sample or promotional copies.

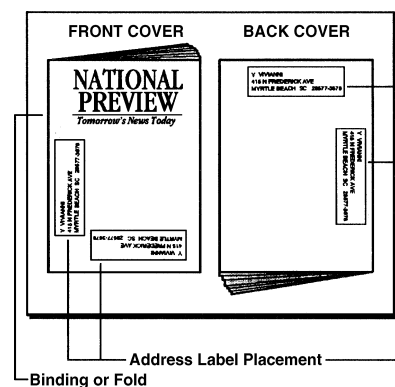
## Location

The delivery address, whether placed on a label, directly on the host publication, a component, or mailing wrapper, must be clearly visible on or through the outside of the mailpiece. Addresses placed on a mailing wrapper must be positioned on the flat side, not on the fold. The address for a polybagged publication must not appear on a component (e.g., a label carrier) that rotates within the bag, and the address must remain visible throughout the full range of motion.

## Labels

White or light-colored paper must be used for address labels. The address should be machine-printed in black or other strongly contrasting ink.

## PERIODICALS ADDRESS PLACEMENT



## Label Carrier

The address may appear on a label carrier, which is a single, unfolded, uncreased sheet of card or paper stock placed on top of a publication enclosed in a clear wrapper. The label carrier must contain the following information:

- The Periodicals imprint or Periodicals endorsement in the upper right corner of the address side unless “Periodicals” is printed on the address side of the polybag.
- The publication title.
- A return address if it carries the mailer endorsement “Address Service Requested.”

At the publisher’s option the label carrier may also show any of this information:

- Subscription order form.
- Subscription renewal information.
- Request for address correction information from the addressee.
- If First-Class Mail or Standard Mail is enclosed, the appropriate endorsement (e.g., “First-Class Mail Enclosed”) or the permit imprint for payment of postage for the enclosure may be placed below the Periodicals imprint or endorsement.
- One line of text referring to material printed on the back of the label carrier where advertising may appear.

## Detached Address Labels

Saturation mailings of Periodicals flats may, at the option of the mailer, be mailed using detached address labels (DALs). A saturation mailing is defined as a mailing sent to at least 75 percent of the total addresses within each carrier route or 90 percent of the residential addresses within the route, whichever is less. Deliveries need not be made to every carrier route of a delivery unit or 5-digit ZIP Code.

Additional standards for the format, physical requirements, packaging, post office notification, and labeling of cartons are shown in DMM A060.

DAL mailings are not eligible for any automation rates, but may qualify for a carrier route rate, subject to the applicable standards. Postage for each piece is based on the combined weight of the flat and the address label.

Postage must be prepaid at the applicable Periodicals rate of postage shown in DMM R200. The DAL must show a notice of entry in the upper right corner of the address area.

## SUMMARY

Periodicals mail is a unique and exclusive classification of mail. Only certain specific types of publications may qualify. The attendant design, construction, and content requirements are quite strict. The application review process can sometimes be viewed as lengthy and intrusive.

Despite all of this, Periodicals mail is one of the most desirable classifications of mail. The status conferred upon a publication authorized Periodicals rates has an instant recognition value among potential advertisers and subscribers. Special handling and consideration is given to Periodicals mail in the postal system. The content and circulation requirements as spelled out in the *Domestic Mail Manual* are necessary in order to maintain the integrity, and hence the value, of this unique classification of mail.



## Exercise 2 - 2

Directions: Circle the best response or fill in the blank to answer the following questions. Check your answers when you have completed the exercise.

1. A Periodicals publication fastened together with one staple is considered an unbound publication.
  - a) true
  - b) false
2. Which of the following places in a Periodicals publication is an acceptable location for the identification (ID) statement?
  - a) on one of the first five pages
  - b) in the masthead on the editorial page (if listed in the table of contents)
  - c) on one of the last three editorial pages inside the back cover in a bound periodical
  - d) all of the above
3. Each physically separate part or section of a Periodicals publication must show the publication title.
  - a) true
  - b) false
4. A qualifying supplement to a Periodicals publication may bear its own permit imprint.
  - a) true
  - b) false
5. An additional protective cover may be added to a publication so long as it covers both the \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ of the publication and extends to within \_\_\_\_\_ inch of the edges opposite the fold or binding.
6. Which of the following is not a true statement regarding eligible supplements to Periodicals publications?
  - a) A supplement to a bound publication may not contain more than 75% advertising matter.
  - b) All supplements to a bound publication must bear the endorsement "Supplement To" followed by the title of the publication or publisher.
  - c) A supplement is formed of one or more printed sheets that are bound into a Periodicals publication.
  - d) The final dimensions of a supplement (length and height) must not exceed the dimensions of the host publication, unless completely enclosed in an envelope or polybag.

7. Which of the following items do not qualify for the Periodicals rates as a permissible component or enclosure?
  - a) products and merchandise items
  - b) calendars not offered for sale
  - c) subscription forms
  - d) protective covers or mailing wrappers
8. Which of the following are allowable “incidental” enclosures at the Periodicals rates of postage?
  - a) a subscription order form
  - b) a reply form for subscriber address information
  - c) a bill for the publication itself
  - d) a statement of account for past purchases of the publication
  - e) all of the above
9. Reading matter for which a publication has accepted payment to include in their publication must be plainly marked \_\_\_\_\_ by the publisher.
10. The delivery address label for a Periodicals publication may be placed in the fold of the publication or its wrapper.
  - a) true
  - b) false
11. A label carrier (placed on top of a publication enclosed in a clear wrapper) may or may not contain the title of the Periodicals publication, depending on the wishes of the publisher.
  - a) true
  - b) false
12. The label carrier may “slide” inside the wrapper, but it is not allowed to be able to completely “rotate” within the confines of the wrapper.
  - a) true
  - b) false



## Answers to Exercise 2 - 2

1. **a, true**; a binding consists of at least two staples.
2. **d, all of the above**; are acceptable locations for the ID statement.
3. **a, true**; each separate part or section must show the publication's official title. In addition, the first part or section must clearly state the number of parts or sections comprising that particular issue.
4. **b, false**; a separate permit imprint indicates that the piece can be mailed on its own. Therefore, the piece cannot be considered a supplement to the publication, and is not eligible for Periodicals rates of postage.
5. **front, back, 3/4**; in addition, the publication title must either be visible through, or printed on, a protective cover or wrapper.
6. **c, a supplement is...that are bound into a Periodicals publication**; supplements are not bound into a publication. If they were, they would not be a supplement, they would be part of the host publication.
7. **a, products and merchandise items**; products may not be sent at the Periodicals rates of postage.
8. **e, all of the above**; all of these additions are allowed at the Periodicals rates of postage (either as advertising or nonadvertising, depending on the circumstances).
9. **advertising**; reading material for which a consideration has been paid (or promised) must be marked as advertising.
10. **b, false**; the delivery address must be placed on the flat side of a mailing wrapper, not in the fold.
11. **b, false**; a label carrier must display the title of the publication.
12. **a, true**; a label carrier may not "spin" or "rotate" within the confines of the mailing wrapper.

The primary purpose of identifying a processing category is to place the mailpiece into the mail processing stream that will most effectively transport the mail. This ensures that your mailings will receive proper handling and expeditious delivery. In addition, the processing category of a mailpiece determines what types of automation discounts are available.

The size of a mailpiece may be determined by the required medium for a particular customer's message (such as a catalog). This can also work in reverse, that is, the desired postage rate can determine the medium. First, you choose the desired postal rate or preparation option, e.g., automation letters. Then, based on the requirements, the designer can "work backwards" to the required piece size.

Individual mailings need to be separated into one of the following five mail processing categories, based solely on the physical dimensions of the mailpiece:

- Letter-size.
- Flat-size.
- Machinable parcels.
- Irregular parcels.
- Outside parcels.



## WHAT YOU WILL LEARN ABOUT USPS PROCESSING CATEGORIES

Upon completion of this module, you should be able to do the following:

- Describe the Postal Service's automated mail processing equipment.
- Describe the minimum and maximum allowable dimensions for a mailpiece.
- Define the meaning of the phrase "rectangular in shape."
- Differentiate between letter-size, and flat-size mailpieces.
- Define the requirements for machinable, nonmachinable, and outside parcels.
- Define the terms aspect ratio, balloon rate, residual shape surcharge, nonstandard, nonstandard surcharge, nonmachinable surcharge, and oversized rate.

## USPS PROCESSING

The Postal Service processes mail by manual, mechanical, or automated operations.

- Manual operations require an employee to read each address on the mail, then sort the mail into “pigeon holes” in a letter or flat case.
- Mechanical operations require an employee to read each address on the mail, then key information in a machine that sorts the mail according to that information.
- Automated operations require only that an employee feed and remove mailpieces from a machine that both reads and sorts the mail.

If your presorted mail is not compatible with USPS automation requirements (such as a letter-size mailpiece more than 1/4-inch thick), it has to be processed mechanically or manually. This is time-consuming and costly and will likely reduce the worksharing discounts you might otherwise be entitled to on mail entered at the Business Mail Entry Unit (BMEU).

The USPS sorts or “processes” mailpieces differently according to their size. The various sizes, or processing categories, of mailpieces are a reflection of the size limits of the sorting equipment or method used to process that particular type of mail. The type of equipment the Postal Service uses to process your mailpieces often determines your potential discounts.

## AUTOMATED LETTER PROCESSING EQUIPMENT

The Postal Service processes and distributes mail through a variety of mechanized and automated equipment. The most efficient and accurate processing comes from the use of automated, high-speed, computerized mail sorting and processing equipment. The Postal Service uses two basic types of automated equipment to process letter-size mail: Optical Character Readers and Barcode Sorters.

### Optical Character Reader (OCR)

An *optical character reader* (OCR) scans addresses on letter-size mail, determines the ZIP+4 code and the delivery point information, and converts that information into a *POSTNET* (Postal Numeric Encoding Technique) barcode. The OCR then prints the barcode in the lower right portion (*barcode clear zone*) of the mailpiece. An initial sortation of the mailpiece by ZIP Code is then performed. OCRs read information printed in the address block.

OCRs verify address information against an internal database. After locating the address, the OCR must be able to see all elements clearly. This is why a complete address and “good” print quality are so important.

The OCR then does an initial sort of the mailpiece, based on the barcode. From that point on, the mailpiece is sorted by reading and interpreting the barcode using high-speed barcode sorters (BCSs). These machines are capable of reading, barcoding, and sorting mail at a rate of 36,000 pieces per hour or 10 pieces per second.

If you accurately barcode your letter-size mailpieces, they can skip the entire OCR process and go straight to a barcode sorter (BCS). It is mail in this category that the Postal Service has designated to receive the maximum postage discount.

### Barcode Sorter (BCS)

A Postal Service barcode sorter (BCS) “reads” POSTNET barcodes on letter-size mailpieces and sorts the mail accordingly. These machines do not read addresses, so an incorrect barcode applied by a customer will cause the piece to be missorted. The BCS is capable of reading and sorting 40,000 pieces per hour, approximately 11 pieces per second.

With the advent of wide area barcode readers (WABCRs), a BCS can now find a barcode almost anywhere on the face of a letter-size mailpiece. This includes both in the address block area and barcode clear zone (defined later in this course). This allows mailers to use their addressing mechanisms to apply barcodes and qualify for lower rates and take advantage of faster, more efficient mail processing. The barcode must be printed within 4 inches of the bottom edge of the piece as part of the address block or within the barcode clear zone in the lower right corner.

The Postal Service offers voluntary certification for the computer systems and printers for POSTNET barcoding. The software used for ZIP+4 Code, delivery point and carrier route matching is also certified. You can obtain a list of vendors offering this hardware and software from your local Postal Business Center or by visiting our website at <http://www.usps.com>.

When purchasing any ZIP+4 matching software, make certain that the product bears the Postal Service certification seal if you plan to claim automation discounts. The software must be Coding Accuracy Support System (CASS) certified. The Postal Service also offers voluntary hardware certification for barcode printing.

### POSTAL SERVICE FLAT-SIZE SORTING EQUIPMENT

Manual sortation is the least efficient method for handling flats. When sortation is mecha-

nized, machines do much of what muscles do, and do it faster. Flat Sorting Machines (FSMs) with a maximum work crew of seven employees can sort about 10,000 pieces per machine hour. Machinable flats can be processed and distributed to delivery units or to other post offices quickly, accurately, and at a lower cost than manual processing.

Barcode scanning and sorting technology has been applied to FSMs, automating the flat sorting process for greater productivity benefits for the Postal Service and mailers. Further details on postal barcoding discounts are covered in modules five and six.

Optical character reader (OCR) technology has now migrated from the letter sorting to the flat sorting machinery. Many USPS flat sorters now have the capability to “read” and interpret delivery address information just like their counterparts in the letter-size mailstream. This makes proper addressing and OCR compatibility of *all* mailpieces even more important.

### FSM 881

Postal employees place flats onto an induction (feeder) belt on the Flat Sorting Machine (FSM) while simultaneously keying address information. The FSM uses “pusher fingers” to push flats, standing vertically and leaning against a main transport belt, until the flat is diverted into a sort bin. The pieces are sorted at a rate of about 40 pieces per minute.

At 82 feet long, the FSM 881 has 100 sort bins, arranged on both sides of the machine. There are two keying stations at each end of the machine. A turn-around wheel at each end brings flats to the second side. The arc formed by this wheel limits potential mailpiece designs.

Open magazines are placed on the FSM 881 with the binding as the leading edge, and the open or loose edge trailing as the piece is carried by the belt. If loose pages are on the leading edge, air can get trapped between them, causing them to fan open and jam the machinery.

## FSM 1000

The FSM 1000 is designed to sort flat mail that was previously considered nonmachinable. The FSM 1000 can sort magazines that are plastic wrapped and flimsy flats that are not rigid enough to stand up on their own. It is also capable of sorting a wider range of different size flat mail than that processed by other USPS flat sorting machines.

The deployment of the FSM 1000 has opened up entirely new definitions of the requirements for “automated” flat-size mailpieces. The qualifications for automated flats are covered in module six, *Automation Requirements*.

## PARCEL SORTATION

The Postal Service began its automated parcel sortation efforts after the letter mail initiatives. New and more productive equipment continues to be deployed. The addition of the linear inline parcel sorter (LIPS) and the FSM 1000 has enabled the Postal Service to automate the distribution of mailpieces previously sorted entirely by hand.

Two other systems remain the backbone of USPS automated parcel sortation efforts:

## Bulk Mail Center Parcel Barcode Sorters

The Postal Service began deployment of the package barcode sorting (PBCS) system to all bulk mail center (BMC) parcel sorters in 1992. The system, which is integrated into the existing parcel sorter's high speed induction units, consists of an overhead omnidirectional scanner that reads mailer and USPS-applied barcodes.

A system controller and a USPS-designed printer/applicator prints and applies barcoded labels on mailpieces without barcodes. The productivity inherent in this system has allowed the Postal Service to begin offering barcode discounts to mailers who barcode their Package Services machinable parcels.

## Small Parcel Bundle Sorter (SPBS)

The SPBS is a modular machine that sorts small parcels and packages or bundles of letters and flats to 100 specific bins for either delivery or processing. Bundled mail and small parcels are dumped into an inclined conveyor where they are transported to an operator who faces and keys the mail based upon the ZIP Code.

The mail is then automatically inducted onto a transport mechanism that can discharge to either side of the machine at the appropriate output destination. The SPBS is typically in use at processing and distribution centers (P&DCs) throughout the country.

## TOURS

To actually see this equipment in operation, call your local Mailpiece Design Analyst. They can arrange a tour of a nearby USPS processing and distribution facility for you and your clients.

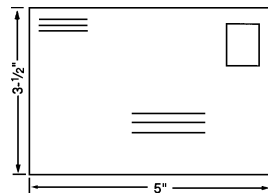
## MAILABILITY

Mailpiece design and construction that conforms to Postal Service requirements reduces costs for you *and* the Postal Service. Proper design and construction of a mailpiece also ensures its mailability. Mailpieces not meeting required minimum criteria, or exceeding certain maximums, are nonmailable. As a reminder, nonmailable means that the piece, as designed, is prohibited from the mailstream. No fee, surcharge, or additional postage may make a nonmailable item mailable.

## MINIMUM DIMENSIONS

All mailpieces that are 1/4 inch thick or less (except keys and identification devices), must be rectangular in shape, at least 3 1/2 inches high, and at least 5 inches long, or they are nonmailable. In addition, all mailable matter must be at least 0.007 inches thick.

## MINIMUM DIMENSIONS



Generally, the placement of the delivery address generally establishes which dimensions of the piece are the length and the height for determining mailability. The length is the dimension that is parallel to the address as read. The height is the dimension perpendicular to the length.

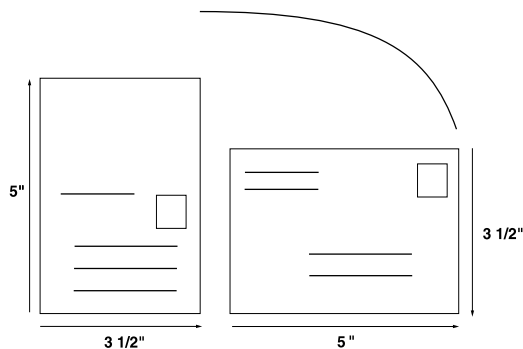
This general rule does not apply to parcels or to pieces mailed at a Standard Mail enhanced carrier route rate, or at an automation rate for flat-size mail.

Improper placement of the address on a mailpiece may result in a failure to meet minimum size standards and can make the mailpiece nonmailable and prohibited from the mailstream.

The same size mailpiece, if under 1/4 inch in thickness, can be both mailable and nonmailable, depending upon the orientation of the delivery address. Be sure to take this into account when considering the layout of "pamphlet" style mailpieces.

## NONMAILABLE

## MAILABLE

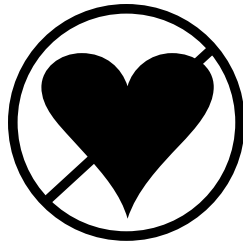


## Rectangular In Shape

Rectangular in shape means that the opposite sides of a mailpiece must be equal in length and meet at right angles. Square mailpieces *are* mailable. The requirement to be rectangular does not exclude a square shape. However, because the minimum mailable size is 3 1/2 by 5 inches, the smallest size a square mailpiece could measure is 5 by 5 inches.

First-Class Mail square mailpieces weighing 1 ounce or less are subject to the current applicable nonstandard surcharge because their length/width ratio is less than 1.3 as specified in DMM C100.

Unfortunately, rectangular in shape does prohibit some creative designs for letters or cards such as those that are “heart-shaped” or with rounded or scalloped edges. These items do not have sides that meet at right angles as required. In order to be mailable, mailpieces such as these must be greater than 1/4 inch in thickness.



## MAXIMUM DIMENSIONS

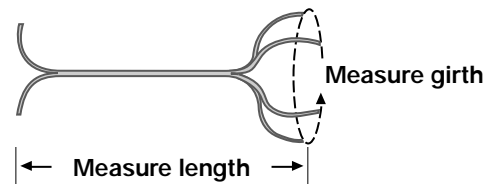
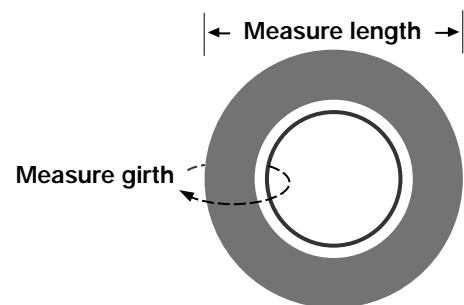
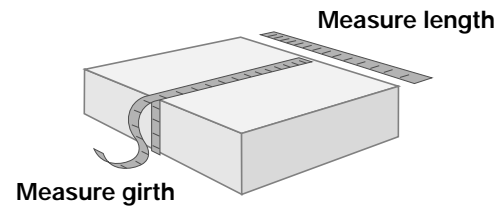
To be mailable, no mailpiece may weigh more than 70 pounds or measure more than 108 inches in length and girth combined. Package Services Parcel Post only, however, may be up to 130 inches in combined length and girth. Length is the distance of the longest dimension and girth is the distance around the thickest part.

## KEYS AND IDENTIFICATION DEVICES

Keys and identification devices are acceptable for mailing if they bear, or have securely attached, a company name and complete mailing address. The attachment must have instructions to return the item, and a statement guaranteeing the payment of postage due upon delivery. These items usually have instructions to the effect “*If found, please drop in nearest mail box. Postage Guaranteed.*”

This service is available to all who wish to use it. No application is required. The items are self-identified and must bear the statement guaranteeing payment of postage. Postage is collected upon delivery in the same manner as postage due is collected for the return of other undeliverable or shortpaid items.

## HOW TO MEASURE LENGTH AND GIRTH

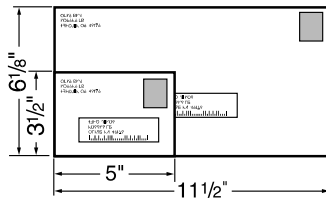


## LETTER-SIZE MAILPIECE DIMENSIONS

Once it is determined to be mailable, the Postal Service bases a mailpiece's processing category solely on its physical dimensions, not address orientation. Letter-size mail consists of those pieces with the following dimensions:

	<u>Minimum</u>	<u>Maximum</u>
<b>Height</b>	3 1/2 inches	6 1/8 inches
<b>Length</b>	5 inches	11 1/2 inches
<b>Thickness</b>	0.007 inch	1/4 inch

## LETTER-SIZE DIMENSIONS



For automation rate eligibility, mailpieces exceeding 4 1/4 inches by 6 inches must be a minimum of 0.009 inch thick (DMM C810). If the mailpiece exceeds any one of the maximum dimensions for letter-size mail, it enters the flat-size category (flats are covered next) as long as it does not exceed any maximum flat-size dimension.

## NONSTANDARD SIZE

The placement of the address can cause a piece to be categorized as nonmailable, and also nonstandard. Except for enhanced carrier route Standard Mail, automation rate flat-size mail and keys and identification devices, the length is the dimension that is parallel to the address as read, and the height is perpendicular to the length.

## Nonstandard Surcharge

The physical dimensions or placement of the address may make a piece of First-Class Mail weighing 1 ounce or less subject to a nonstandard surcharge.

Nonstandard mail may result in processing delays or damaged mail because the mail is not compatible with machine processing. For this reason, mailers are discouraged from designing nonstandard pieces.

## Nonstandard First-Class Mail

A First-Class Mail mailpiece weighing 1 ounce or less, and not qualifying for a card rate, is nonstandard if it exceeds any of the following dimensions:

- Length exceeds 11 1/2 inches.
  - Height exceeds 6 1/8 inches.
  - Thickness exceeds 1/4 inch.
- or**
- Its length divided by its height (*aspect ratio*) is less than 1.3 or more than 2.5 inches.

Letter-size Standard Mail mailpieces are never subject to the nonstandard surcharge. However, Standard Mail mailpieces, under 3.3 ounces, that exceed any letter-size dimension are charged a higher minimum per piece rate.

Your postage costs may be lower if you are able to keep your Standard Mail (A) mailpiece letter-sized. To accomplish this, you might consider adding a final fold to the piece. Nonstandard letter-size mail (of any class) is ineligible for USPS letter-size automation discounts.

Notice 3A, *Letter-Size Mail Dimensional Standards Template*, can be used to determine qualification for the letter-size processing category, as well as nonstandard surcharge and aspect ratio.

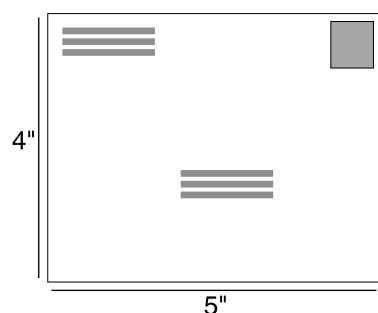


**!** Letter-size mailpieces of any class not meeting the aspect ratio requirements are ineligible for automation discounts.

### Aspect Ratio

The aspect ratio of a mailpiece is its length divided by its height. For letter-size mail, this should be not less than 1.3 nor more than 2.5. Mailpieces outside this range can cause problems in the Postal Service's sorting equipment as they tend to tumble or jam during processing. Follow the instructions in the shaded area in the upper right corner of Notice 3A to determine whether a mailpiece meets the aspect ratio requirement.

### NONMACHINABLE ASPECT RATIO: 1.25



$$5 \text{ divided by } 4 = 1.25$$

### ODD-SHAPED ITEMS IN ENVELOPES

Pens, bottle caps, and similar odd-shaped items are prohibited in letter-size envelopes at the single-piece (full) First-Class rate (see DMM C024.18). This is in part due to the potential for damage to USPS cancellation equipment.

Pieces such as these cannot be assessed a nonstandard surcharge to make them mailable. These types of premium items are mailable if they are placed in a padded mailer, or submitted as part of a presorted, discounted, mailing if they are properly protected against normal postal handling.

### STAMPED CARDS AND POSTCARDS

Stamped cards provided by the Postal Service and privately produced postcards are designed to be mailed at the card rate (a subclass of First-Class Mail).

Postcards and stamped cards have these characteristics:

- Postcards are classified as part of the letter-size mail category. They are privately printed mailing cards.
- Stamped cards are cards supplied by the Postal Service. A stamped card already has a postage stamp impressed or imprinted on it.

Postcards must fall within the following minimum and maximum dimensions, including height, length, and thickness. A double postcard consists of two attached postcards, one of which is designed to detach after receipt and be returned via the mails as a reply card.

### POSTCARD DIMENSIONS

	<u>Minimum</u>	<u>Maximum</u>
<b>Height</b>	3 1/2 inches	4 1/4 inches
<b>Length</b>	5 inches	6 inches
<b>Thickness</b>	0.007 inch	0.016 inch

Please note that any item smaller than the minimum is nonmailable. Any item larger than the maximum does not qualify for the card rate.

The Standard Mail rate structure does not include additional discounts for postcard-size mailpieces. If you are designing a Standard Mail mailpiece from a single piece of cardstock, there is no reason to restrict your design to the dimensions listed above. There is, however, as previously mentioned, a rate incentive to remain within the letter-size processing category in Standard Mail.

## Construction

Qualification for First-Class Mail card rates is not based solely on size. There are additional construction and layout requirements that you must follow. While the piece may still be mailable, failure to adhere to these requirements will require payment of postage at the appropriate First-Class Mail letter rates.

A postcard must be made of unfolded and uncreased paper or cardstock. The stock must be a light color to ensure legibility of the delivery address and postal markings. In general, a qualifying postcard cannot have any attachments or enclosures.

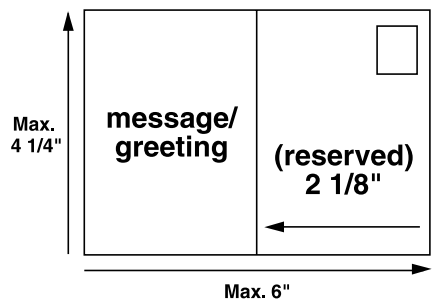


**DMM C100.2**

## Layout

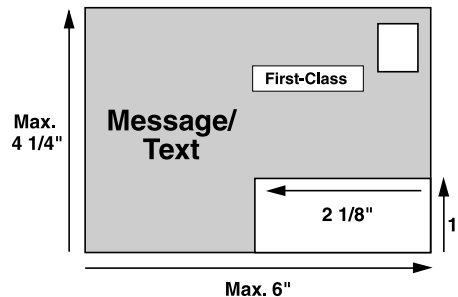
First-Class Mail postage rates for cards are lower than those for letters. To ensure that the Postal Service gains the projected savings in processing these smaller-sized mailpieces, there are additional restrictions on address placement and layout. For pieces intended to be mailed singly by the general consumer, a space at least 2 1/8 inches wide, from top to bottom, measured from the right edge of the card, must be reserved for address, postage and postal endorsements.

### RESERVED ADDRESS SPACE FOR INDIVIDUAL POSTCARDS:



If claimed at the First-Class postcard rate, it must meet certain guidelines if a message appears on the address side. Ideally, the layout is as described above. However, if the message extends over to the address side, the message must be shaded or surrounded by a border, it must be above the address and at least 1" height. If you choose not to shade or border the message, a border must appear around the delivery address, leaving at least 1/8" clearance between the edge of the border and the delivery address.

### RESERVED ADDRESS SPACE FOR PRESORTED POSTCARDS:



## Double Postcards

A qualifying double postcard consists of two attached postcards, folded before mailing. The first half of the double postcard is addressed to the recipient. The second, or reply half, is intended to be returned to the sender as reply mail. You pay only for the first half when mailing. Only the returned reply cards are ever charged postage. In this fashion, the Postal Service ensures that it is paid only for services rendered.

A double postcard must be folded before mailing so that the address on the reply half is covered. The first half of the double postcard must be prepared to be detached before the reply half is returned. The reply half of a qualifying double postcard must be used for reply purposes only, and may not be a continuation of the message to the recipient.



*Presorted and/or single-piece rate First-Class Mail Postcards can be less expensive than some Standard Mail (A) rates.*

## FLAT-SIZE MAILPIECE DIMENSIONS

By definition, a mailpiece is considered flat-size if it exceeds any one of the maximum dimensions for letter-size mail. This is assuming it does not exceed any maximum flat-size dimension.

A mailpiece must not exceed any of the maximum physical dimensions to be classified as a processing category. A mailpiece may appear to be a letter in two dimensions but will actually be considered a flat when the third dimension is found to exceed the letter-size maximum.

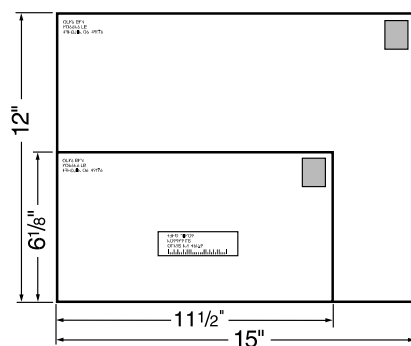
Flat-size mail consists of those pieces with the following dimensions:

- More than 11 1/2 inches long.
- or
- More than 6 1/8 inches high.
- or
- More than 1/4 inch thick.

### Maximum Dimensions:

- Maximum length: 15 inches.
- Maximum height: 12 inches.
- Maximum thickness: 3/4 inch.

## FLAT-SIZE DIMENSIONS



A flat-size mailpiece must exceed at least one of the letter-size maximums.

## Nonstandard Surcharge

Flat-size First-Class Mail weighing 1 ounce or less is considered nonstandard. A surcharge is assessed on each piece of nonstandard First-Class Mail that is mailed at the full, single-piece rate. A lesser surcharge is assessed on each nonstandard piece mailed at presorted First-Class Mail rates. See DMM R100.10 for the nonstandard surcharge amounts.

## Enhanced Carrier Route Maximums

The maximum dimensions for a qualifying Enhanced Carrier Route (ECR) rate Standard Mail mailpiece are:

	<b>Maximum</b>
<b>Height</b>	11 3/4 inches
<b>Length</b>	14 inches
<b>Thickness</b>	3/4 inches

These more restrictive length and height maximums do not apply to merchandise samples mailed with detached address labels (DALs).



### EXERCISE 3 - 1

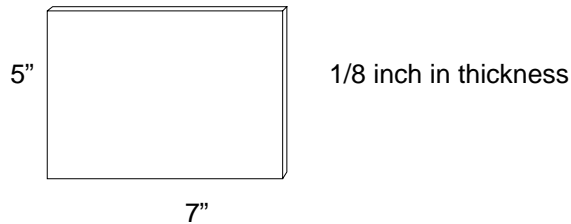
Directions: Circle the best response or fill in the blank to answer the following questions. Check your answers when you have completed the exercise.

1. All mailpieces, except for keys and identification devices, that are \_\_\_\_\_ inch thick or less must be \_\_\_\_\_ in shape and at least \_\_\_\_\_ inches high and \_\_\_\_\_ inches long.
2. Except for enhanced carrier route mail, the orientation of the \_\_\_\_\_ address on a mailpiece determines the length and height.
3. Square mailpieces are mailable.
  - a) true
  - b) false
4. A letter-size mailpiece may be no more than \_\_\_\_\_ inches high or \_\_\_\_\_ inches long or \_\_\_\_\_ inch thick.
5. To determine the aspect ratio of a letter-size mailpiece, you:
  - a) Multiply the length by the thickness.
  - b) Divide the length by the height.
  - c) Divide the height by the length.
  - d) None of the above.
6. Pens, bottle caps, and similar \_\_\_\_\_ - shaped items are prohibited in letter-sized envelopes at the single piece (full) First-Class Mail rates.
7. A mailpiece qualifying for postcard rates must be a single piece of cardstock no more than \_\_\_\_\_ inches high by \_\_\_\_\_ inches long.
8. A qualifying double postcard is charged postage for both the addressed half and the reply half when originally mailed.
  - a) true
  - b) false
9. A flat-size mailpiece may be no more than \_\_\_\_\_ inches long or \_\_\_\_\_ inches high or \_\_\_\_\_ inch thick.
10. The window on a letter-size windowed envelope must be parallel to the longest dimension of the envelope.
  - a) true
  - b) false

**EXERCISE 3 - 1**

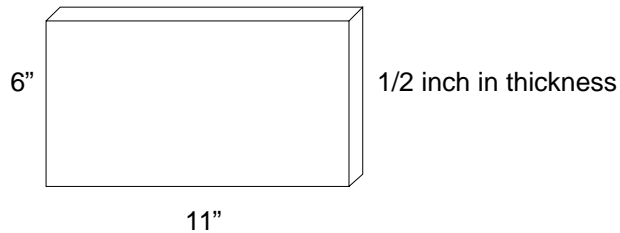
Identify the following mailpieces as either letter-size or flat-size.

11. The following mailpiece is:



- a) letter-size
- b) flat-size
- c) neither

12. The following mailpiece is:



- a) letter-size
- b) flat-size
- c) neither

13. The aspect ratio of the mailpiece in question number 11, above, is:

- a) 1
- b) 1.5
- c) 1.4
- d) 1.9

14. The aspect ratio of the mailpiece in question number 11, above, would require the payment of the First-Class Mail nonstandard surcharge if the piece were under 1 ounce when mailed.

- a) true
- b) false

## ANSWERS TO EXERCISE 3 - 1

1. **1/4, rectangular, 3 1/2, 5**; only keys and identification devices are not subject to these minimum requirements. All other pieces not meeting these minimums are nonmailable.
2. **delivery**; the dimension of the mailpiece parallel to the read direction of the delivery address is the length, the opposite dimension is the height.
3. **a, true**; a square is considered a rectangle and is mailable, assuming the minimum length, height, and thickness requirements for mailability are met.
4. **6 1/8, 11 1/2, 1/4**; are the letter-size maximum dimensions. Pieces exceeding any one of these maximums are considered flats, so long as they do not exceed any flat-size maximum.
5. **b, divide the length by the height**; the result of this calculation determines the aspect ratio. The aspect ratio of a letter-size mailpiece must be fall between 1.3 to 2.5 (inclusive), otherwise the mailpiece is considered to be nonstandard.
6. **odd**; due to their potential to harm postal equipment, employees, and other mail, these items are prohibited from letter-size envelopes mailed at the single-piece (full) First-Class Mail rates. Such items may be enclosed in presorted, discounted, First-Class and Standard Mail mailings, and in nonletter-size envelopes.
7. **4 1/4, 6**; in addition, the piece must be no more than 0.016 inch in thickness.
8. **b, false**; postage is charged only for the addressed half when originally mailed.
9. **15, 12, 3/4**; these are the flat-size maximum dimensions.
10. **a, true**; letter-size window envelopes not meeting this requirement are nonmailable.
11. **a, letter-size**; this piece meets the minimum requirements for mailability and does not exceed any letter-size maximum.
12. **b; flat-size**; this mailpiece exceeds the letter-size maximum thickness of 1/4 inch, but does not exceed any flat-size maximum.
13. **c, 1.4**; the length of this mailpiece divided by its height equals 1.4.
14. **b, false**; the aspect ratio of 1.4 is within the acceptable range of 1.3 to 2.5.

## PARCELS

Mailpieces that are neither letter nor flat-sized (except for some qualifying automation flat-size pieces) are “parcels.” They may be either machinable, irregular, or outside parcels, based on their characteristics.

The contents of a parcel will frequently determine its overall size and shape. Therefore, it may be difficult or perhaps impossible to alter the dimensions of a parcel to comply with specific criteria for mechanized processing. At the very least, if possible, you should make changes to avoid the “balloon” rate, and the nonmachinable surcharge (covered later in this section).

Even without altering the basic size, shape, or weight, there are some things you can do to enhance the processing and delivery of your parcel. Proper and legible addressing and avoiding some of the more negative characteristics of “outside” parcels can go a long way to ensuring efficient delivery.

## MACHINABLE PARCELS

Machinable parcels are those articles that can be processed by parcel sorting machines deployed in the Postal Service’s bulk mail centers (BMCs). Parcel sorting machines are large machines with an input station controlled by a computer, which mechanically sorts and distributes parcels. Machinable parcels include mailpieces that meet the minimum and maximum criteria listed below and do not have any characteristics that would make them flat-size mail, irregular parcels, or outside parcels.

## Machinable Parcel Dimensions

Machinable parcels consist of those pieces that are rectangular and within the dimensions listed in DMM C050:

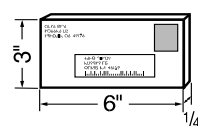
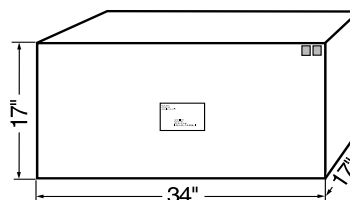
	<u>Minimum</u>	<u>Maximum</u>
<b>Height</b>	3 inches	17 inches
<b>Length</b>	6 inches	34 inches
<b>Thickness</b>	1/4 inch	17 inches
<b>Weight</b>	6 ounces	35 pounds

For books or other printed matter, the maximum weight is 25 pounds.


Soft goods wrapped in paper or plastic bags, and enveloped printed matter weighing up to 5 pounds, are machinable only if all applicable packaging standards in C010 are met.

## MACHINABLE PARCEL DIMENSIONS

### Maximum



### Minimum

 Only *machinable* parcels qualify for the USPS parcel barcode discounts.

### Additional Design Guidelines for Machinable Parcels:

- **Geometric Shapes:** The preferred shapes for machinable parcels are squares, cubes, and rectangles. Acceptable shapes include any soft parcel that meets the minimum and maximum dimensions without compression. Shapes that are not preferred include round objects, triangular objects, and cylindrical objects.
- **Packaging Materials:** The preferred packaging material for parcels is any cardboard or heavy paper wrapping. Materials that cause problems with automated sorting equipment include heavily waxed or oiled materials and black wrapping paper; these should not be used.
- **Sealing Materials:** The preferred sealing material for parcels is reinforced tape of almost any type. Sealing materials that are unacceptable include string, twine, rope, or any material that does not adhere to the surface of the package.

### Other Machinable Parcels

Some parcels that do not meet all the general criteria for machinable parcels may be successfully processed by bulk mail center (BMC) parcel sorting equipment. A BMC plant manager may authorize a mailer to enter such parcels as machinable parcels rather than irregular parcels, if the parcels are properly labeled, entered at a post office within the service area of the authorizing BMC, and are destined for delivery within the same BMC service area.

### Automated Parcel Processing

The Postal Service offers an automation discount for machinable parcels with mailer applied barcodes. There are several acceptable parcel barcode types. More information on this subject is in modules five and six.

### IRREGULAR PARCELS

Irregular parcels are those parcels that, because of size or weight, cannot be processed by bulk mail center (BMC) parcel sorting machines. Irregular parcels are pieces that do not meet the criteria for machinable parcels. This includes mailpieces with any

of the following characteristics:

- Less than 6 inches long.
- Less than 3 inches high.
- Less than 1/4 inch thick.
- Less than 6 ounces.
- Rolls and tubes up to 26 inches long.
- Merchandise samples that are not individually addressed and are not letter-size or flat-size..
- Unwrapped, paper-wrapped, or sleeve-wrapped articles that are not letter-size or flat-size.
- Articles enclosed in envelopes that are not letter-size, flat-size, or machinable parcels.

### OUTSIDE PARCELS

Outside parcels are those parcels that, because of their size, shape, density, container, or nature of contents, cannot be processed in postal sacks. Outside parcels include any of the following items:

- A parcel more than:
  - 34 inches long.
  - 17 inches wide.
  - 17 inches high/thick.
  - 35 pounds (25 pounds for books and other printed matter).
- or
- A carton containing more than 24 ounces of liquid in glass containers.
- 1 gallon or more of liquid in metal or plastic containers.
- Can, (paint, etc.).
- Roll, or tube, longer than 26 inches.
- Metal-banded boxes or wooden or metal boxes.
- Unpackaged articles including tires, exhaust pipes, trailer hitches, etc.
- Harmful and hazardous matter except ORM-D materials.
- Books, printed matter, and business forms weighing more than 25 pounds.
- A high-density parcel (see DMM C010.8.2) weighing more than 15 pounds and exerting more than 60 pounds per square foot on its smallest side.
- Parcels packaged in containers that do not "slide" on parcel sorter chutes.



**NONMACHINABLE SURCHARGE**

Nonmachinable mailpieces mailed at the inter-BMC/ASF Parcel Post, intra-BMC/ASF Parcel Post, and DBMC Parcel Select rates may be subject to a nonmachinable surcharge in addition to normal postage. The surcharge applies to all the items previously listed as outside parcels with the following additions:

- A perishable such as eggs.
- Any shrub or tree, regardless of packaging.
- Any roll or tube, regardless of length.
- A film case weighing more than 5 pounds or with strap type closures (unless receiving prior authorization).
- Insecurely wrapped parcels.

If a mailer pays the special handling fee (covered in module ten, *Special Services*), then the nonmachinable surcharge is waived.

**BALLOON RATE**

Any Parcel Post or Priority Mail piece weighing less than 15 pounds and measuring more than 84 inches in length and girth (up to 108 inches) is charged the applicable 15 pound rate, regardless of weight. Depending on their characteristics, Parcel Post pieces subject to this balloon rate may also be charged a nonmachinable surcharge.

**OVERSIZED RATE**

Only Parcel Post mailpieces may exceed the normal 108 inch length and girth maximums. Parcel Post mailpieces may measure up to 130 inches in combined length and girth. Parcel Post mailpieces exceeding 108 inches in length and girth are charged a special oversized rate.

The Parcel Post nonmachinable surcharge does not apply to pieces mailed at the oversized rate.

**RESIDUAL SHAPE (PARCEL) SURCHARGE**

Standard Mail pieces that are not letter-size or flat-size are subject to a Residual Shape Surcharge (RSS) in addition to regular postage. This includes all pieces prepared as parcels under any parcel preparation and sortation option.

Pieces qualifying and submitted for flat-size automation discounts are not subject to this surcharge.

**SUMMARY**

The correct classification of your mailpiece's processing category is crucial. The processing category often determines (and limits) the rates, discounts, and preparation options for which your mailpiece will qualify.

For instance, not all flat-size pieces will qualify for Standard Mail ECR preparation discounts. Letter-size mailpieces that do not meet the aspect ratio requirements do not qualify for automation rates.

In certain cases, you may need to know the intended postal discounted rate before you can design the piece or package. Failure to take processing category into account before, during, and sometimes after, the design stage can lead to delays and potentially higher rates during the postal acceptance and verification process at the business mail entry unit (BMEU).

**EXERCISE 3 - 2**

Directions: Circle the best response or fill in the blank to answer the following questions. Check your answers when you have completed the exercise.

1. The maximum height and thickness for a machinable parcel is:
  - a) 1/4 inch
  - b) 11 1/2 inches
  - c) 15 inches
  - d) 17 inches
2. The Postal Service offers a discount for machinable parcels with the appropriate mailer applied \_\_\_\_\_.
3. A parcel that is rectangular on all sides is categorized as an irregular parcel if its weight is less than:
  - a) 6 ounces
  - b) 8 ounces
  - c) 11 ounces
  - d) 25 pounds
4. Rolls and tubes up to 26 inches long are:
  - a) machinable parcels
  - b) irregular parcels
  - c) outside parcels
  - d) nonmailable
5. Metal boxes, wooden boxes, and metal-banded parcels are considered:
  - a) machinable parcels
  - b) irregular parcels
  - c) outside parcels
  - d) nonmailable
6. A parcel containing books or other printed matter is categorized as an outside parcel if its weight is more than:
  - a) 1 pound
  - b) 10 pounds
  - c) 25 pounds
  - d) 35 pounds
7. Parcel Post and Priority Mail pieces weighing less than \_\_\_\_\_ pounds and measuring over \_\_\_\_\_ inches combined length and girth are charged the applicable \_\_\_\_\_ pound rate.

### ANSWERS TO EXERCISE 3 - 2

1. **d, 17 inches**; the maximum height and thickness for a machinable parcel is 17 inches. The maximum length is twice that; 34 inches.
2. **barcode**; discounts are now available for prebarcoded parcels.
3. **a, 6 ounces**.
4. **b, irregular parcels**; rolls and tubes are not machinable on USPS parcel sorters. Rolls and tubes greater than 26 inches in length are outside parcels.
5. **c, outside parcels**; while mailable, these types of parcels are never machinable and are subject to the nonmachinable surcharge.
6. **c, 25 pounds**; printed matter is typically a high-density parcel, hence the lower weight limit.
7. **15, 84, 15**; referred to as a “balloon” rate. This regulation ensures that the postage charged for this type of piece covers the cost of handling.

**T**he purpose of an address is to specify the delivery location (mailing address) of a mailpiece. Mailpieces with complete and properly formatted addresses allow the Postal Service to provide consistent, on-time delivery. To receive proper delivery of your mailpieces, and to benefit fully from mail processing automation you need to correctly address your mailpieces.

The purpose of this module is to introduce you to the correct procedures for addressing and return addressing your mail. In addition, we will cover the methods available for updating and verifying your current addresses. We will also point out areas of special concern involving mailpiece design.



## WHAT YOU WILL LEARN ABOUT ADDRESSING

Upon completion of this module, you should be able to do the following:

- Define the purpose of an address.
- Identify the elements of an address and describe the proper guidelines for an address block design.
- Identify the standard Postal Service abbreviations used in addressing.
- Define the purpose of Coding Accuracy Support System (CASS) certified address matching software.
- Describe the features of ancillary service endorsements.
- Describe the delivery address and return address placement guidelines.
- Determine when a return address is required.



To ensure compatibility with the Postal Service's Optical Character Readers, follow the address printing and location requirements outlined in the previous module.

## DELIVERY ADDRESS

All mail must bear a delivery address. Except for simplified addresses, a delivery address must contain the following elements, from top to bottom.

- The name of the recipient.
- Street name (or PO Box) and number.
- City and state.
- ZIP Code (except on pieces mailed by the general public).

A mailpiece may not have more than one delivery address.

## DELIVERY ADDRESS FORMAT

The Postal Service and the mailing industry have jointly developed standardized formats for addresses. These formats enhance the processing and delivery of mail and reduce Undeliverable-As-Addressed (UAA) mail. This provides for mutual cost savings through improved efficiency.

The Postal Service encourages mailers to use these standards to improve delivery of their mail. You will also improve the quality of the address information stored in your customer files.

## STANDARDIZED ADDRESS FORMAT

<div style="border-bottom: 1px solid black; height: 15px; width: 100%; margin-bottom: 2px;"></div> <div style="border-bottom: 1px solid black; height: 15px; width: 100%; margin-bottom: 2px;"></div> <div style="border-bottom: 1px solid black; height: 15px; width: 100%;"></div>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: 0 auto;"></div>
<p><b>1. NON-ADDRESS DATA</b></p> <p><b>2. INFORMATION/ATTN:</b></p> <p><b>3. RECIPIENT</b></p> <p><b>4. DELIVERY ADDRESS</b></p> <p><b>5. CITY, STATE, ZIP CODE</b></p>	<p>▶ XX 1234567890-XX</p> <p>▶ MR STANLEY DOE</p> <p>▶ LAST NATIONAL BANK</p> <p>▶ PO BOX 345</p> <p>▶ NEW YORK, NY 10163-0345</p>

### 1) Nonaddress Data Line

Nonaddress data, such as accounting numbers, subscription codes, presort codes, advertising, or logos, if used, should appear on the topmost line, above the name of recipient line or above the information/attention line.

### 2) Information/Attention Line

The line above the recipient line is an optional line for additional address information. Use this line to direct mail to the attention of a specific person or to provide other information that facilitates delivery (the name of a department within a company, etc.).

### 3) Name of Recipient Line

The name of the recipient (business or individual) should appear on the line above the delivery address line. This should be either the third or fourth line from the bottom, depending on possible overflow from the delivery address line.

### 4) Delivery Address Line

The USPS designates the line immediately above the post office (city), state, and ZIP Code as the delivery address line. The street address, post office box number, or rural route number and box number (or highway contract number and box number) should appear on this line.

Mail addressed to occupants of multiunit buildings should include the apartment number, suite, room, or other unit designation. Place this information immediately after the street address, on the same line.

If the delivery line is too long, place the apartment number or other secondary address element on the line above the delivery address line (wrap up). If a building name is necessary, place it on the line above the delivery address line.

### 5) Post Office, State and ZIP Code Line

For domestic mail, the post office (city), state, and ZIP Code or ZIP+4 Code information should be the last line of the address. Always use the standard two-letter state abbreviations. ZIP+4 Codes must be printed as five digits, a hyphen, and four digits.

If field lengths do not allow all three elements to fit on one line, place the ZIP+4 Code on the line immediately below the city and state (wrap down). Left justify the ZIP+4 Code with the other lines of the address (however, this is not a recommended procedure).

## STANDARD ABBREVIATIONS

The Postal Service and the mailing industry have standardized abbreviations over the years to ensure recognition by automation equipment. Use abbreviations to keep the necessary information on one line whenever possible.

Generally, 28 spaces (positions) are available in a mailer's data line for use in addressing. The abbreviations will confine the necessary information of the delivery address line or the post office, state, and ZIP Code to the 28 space limitation.

Standardized two-letter state abbreviations are listed in Publication 25, *Designing Letter Mail*, Appendix D.



### PUB 28, APPENDIX B

### Street Names

The Postal Service prefers complete street names. Street names should always be spelled out in their entirety and never abbreviated. The Postal Service recommends abbreviations of street names only when necessary to contain the information on one line and directionals and suffixes have already been abbreviated. The abbreviations must be USPS-approved abbreviations.



*All discounted mailings require a correct 5-digit or ZIP+4 Code. Do not omit the hyphen in the ZIP+4 Code! The hyphen is a required element in a proper ZIP+4 Code.*

### Street Suffix Abbreviations

At one time, there were 26 streets named "Peachtree" in the United States, with 15 of them in Atlanta, Georgia. These "Peachtree" streets were located in a total of 12 different ZIP Codes. A mailpiece addressed to Atlanta with the street name Peachtree, but with no suffix or secondary name, will likely be delayed in delivery.

The street suffix is very important in verifying the ZIP Code or ZIP+4 Code. Always abbreviate the suffix using the postal-approved standard. When the street name contains two consecutive words that *can* be suffixes, spell out both words and abbreviate only the actual suffix.

#### EXAMPLE:

289 MAIN AVENUE DRIVE

Should be abbreviated as:

289 MAIN AVENUE DR

"AVENUE" is actually part of the street name and should not be abbreviated.

A list of USPS approved street suffix abbreviations is in Publication 25, *Designing Letter Mail*, Appendix D.

### Directionals

A street address can contain a predirectional and/or a postdirectional in its name. It is abbreviated if it is one of the eight official geographic directional abbreviations (i.e., N, S, E, W, NE, NW, SE, SW).

#### EXAMPLE:

101 WEST MAIN STREET

Should be abbreviated as:

101 W MAIN ST

### Secondary Address Unit Designators

Mail addressed to multiunit buildings should include the secondary address unit designator. Common designators include apartment number, suite number, room number, department name, floor number, and unit name. Abbreviate the designators whenever possible.

#### EXAMPLE:

101 W MAIN ST APARTMENT 12

Should be abbreviated as:

101 W MAIN ST APT 12

In this case, the designator is "apartment." Do not use the pound sign when the correct designator is known. However, if you must use the pound sign, leave a space between the sign and the number.

### Post Office Box Addresses

For a post office box address, use the prefix "PO BOX," followed by a space, and then the box number. In addition to being a proper address for an actual post office box, the PO BOX term is also used in caller service addresses.

### DUAL DELIVERY ADDRESSES—DIFFERENT LINES

The Postal Service discourages the use of dual delivery addresses including both a street address and a post office box number. If used, do not place both addresses on the same line.

Mail bearing both a street address and a post office box number should contain two separate address lines. The mail is delivered to the address appearing on the line immediately above the city, state, and ZIP Code line.

#### EXAMPLE:

ABC COMPANY  
PO BOX 100  
1 ANY LANE  
ANYWHERE US 12345-6789

The Postal Service will deliver a mailpiece addressed as above to the street address, not the PO Box. This is because the street address is on the line directly above the city, state, and ZIP Code line. When a PO Box is included in an address, place it on the line directly above the city, state, and ZIP Code.

### FOREIGN ADDRESSES

The very last line of mail addressed to a foreign country should contain the country name printed in capital letters (no abbreviations). When using foreign postal codes, place them on the line above the country of destination. For additional information on mailing to foreign countries, check the *International Mail Manual* or contact your local post office for assistance.

#### EXAMPLE:

MR THOMAS CLARK  
117 RUSSELL DRIVE  
LONDON WIP7HQ  
ENGLAND

### Canadian Addresses

For mail addressed to Canada only, you may use either of the following formats if the Canadian postal delivery zone number is shown in the address.

#### EXAMPLE:

MRS HELEN K SAUNDERS  
1010 CLEAR STREET  
OTTAWA ONTARIO K1A OB1  
CANADA

OR

MRS HELEN K SAUNDERS  
1010 CLEAR STREET  
OTTAWA ONTARIO CANADA  
K1A OB1



## MILITARY ADDRESSES

Overseas mail addressed to military personnel must show grade; full name, including first name and middle name or initial; and unit number. The last line must contain the APO or FPO designation and the appropriate two-letter “state” abbreviation (AA, AE, or AP), followed by the ZIP+4 or 5-digit ZIP Code.

### EXAMPLES:

PC1 DAVID LEE JONES  
X-1 DIV/ADMIN  
USS KITTY HAWK (CVA-61)  
FPO AP 96634-2770

PFC SUSAN M SMITH  
COMPANY A 122 SIG BN  
UNIT 20511 BOX 4290  
APO AA 34049-2342

**!** Mail for military addresses is often delivered overseas. You may need to include a customs declaration for your mailpiece. Check with your local post office prior to mailing.

## ALTERNATIVE ADDRESS FORMATS

The use of alternative address formats allows the mailer to simplify their address database management, and/or direct the delivery of their mailpiece to either a named recipient, or generic occupant.

The regulations governing the use of alternative addressing formats are in DMM A040.

### Exceptional Address Format

Mailers have the option of using an “exceptional form of address” on their mailpieces. You may use either one or two lines for the exceptional form of address.

#### EXAMPLE:

JANE DOE OR CURRENT RESIDENT  
1 ANY ST APT 2  
ANYWHERE US 12345-6789

JANE DOE  
OR CURRENT RESIDENT  
1 ANY ST APT 2  
ANYWHERE US 12345-6789

CURRENT RESIDENT OR  
JANE DOE  
1 ANY ST APT 2  
ANYWHERE US 12345-6789

The word “Occupant” may be substituted for “Resident” and the word “Current” is not mandatory. The exceptional address format *may not* be used on:

- Express Mail.
- Mail that is registered, certified, insured, or COD.
- Mail bearing an ancillary service endorsement.
- Certain types of Periodicals.
- Mail addressed to an overseas post office.

### Occupant Address Format

To selectively address mail to a rural route and box number, a street address, or a post office box, without addressing the customer by name, use the following format:

1. "Postal Customer" (or "Occupant" or "Resident").
2. Delivery address (street and number, including apartment number, post office box and number, or rural route and box number).
3. Post office (city), state, and ZIP Code.

EXAMPLE:

POSTAL CUSTOMER  
1 ANY ST APT 2  
ANYWHERE US 12345-6789

The Occupant Address Format may not be used on:

- Mail addressed to an overseas post office.
- Periodical Publications intended to count as subscriber or requester copies to meet applicable circulation standards.

### Simplified Address Format

Mail may carry the simplified address format ("Postal Customer") when general distribution is desired to:

- each boxholder on a rural route or highway contract route,
- each family on a rural route (at any post office), or
- all boxholders at a post office without city carrier service.

You may use a more specific address, such as "Rural Route Boxholder," followed by the name of the post office and state. The Postal Service does not permit more descriptive designations such as "Farmer," "Food Buyer," "Voter," etc.

### Government Agencies

Only official matter mailed by agencies of the federal, state, or local government may be distributed to each stop or possible delivery on city carrier routes, or to each post office boxholder at a post office with city carrier service.

### OPTIONAL ENDORSEMENT LINES

A mailer may prepare mailings without applying pressure-sensitive package labels or facing slips to the top piece of packages. Instead, the mailer may use a specific optional endorsement line above the address block or on the address label on the top piece of mail in a package.

Strict requirements exist concerning placement, characters used, alignment of margins, and type sizes allowed in optional endorsement lines. Format specifications are in DMM M013.

### Keyline

A keyline is an optional line of mailer information that may appear at least two lines above the delivery address. Under some postage payment systems or address change services, a required data line that contains specific information about a mailpiece may appear. An example of what the keyline may look like is #JAN84 000CA#1508 IT52. This is the customer's own information.



*Only government agencies may saturate city delivery routes with simplified addressed mailpieces, private businesses may not. You can contact the delivery post office to determine which routes are eligible.*



For Letter-size mailpieces, the delivery address should be positioned within the OCR Read Area, as discussed in the previous module.

## LOCATION

The placement of an address on a mailpiece establishes the height and length dimensions. This is true on all mailable matter except Enhanced Carrier Route Standard Mail and automation rate flat-size mail.

The layout of your mailpiece must include a clear space for the delivery address, required markings, and postage. The address must be visible and legible. Place the address on the same side as the postage. For a parcel, this should be the side with the largest surface area.

On larger mailpieces, the address area may be simply a clear space on the face of the piece. If this is the case, format the address area so that the return address is in the upper left and the postage is in the upper right, relative to the delivery address.

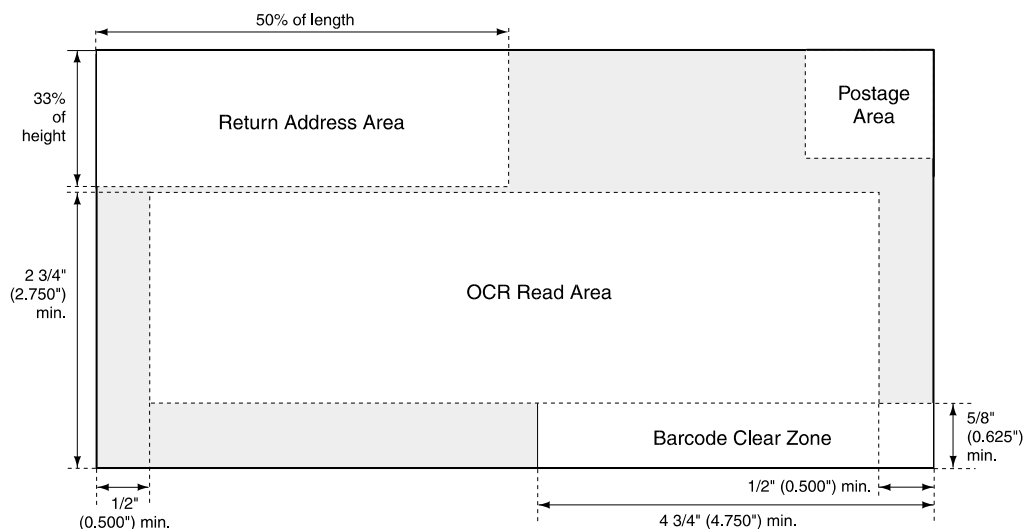
For letter-size mailpieces, follow the layout/design guidelines below and those listed in Publication 25, *Designing Letter and Reply Mail*.

## Window Envelopes

For letter-size envelopes, the delivery address window must be parallel with the longest edge. For flat-size, the window may be parallel with any edge. The window opening must be large enough to show the entire address throughout the full range of motion of the insert.

If covered, the window material must be transparent enough to allow the address to be legible. Print the address on a white or lightly colored insert.

## OCR READ AREA





## EXERCISE 4 - 1

Directions: Circle the best response or fill in the blank to answer the following questions. Check your answers when you have completed the exercise.

1. The name of the recipient should be placed on the line directly \_\_\_\_\_ the delivery address line.
2. If necessary, you may “wrap down” the ZIP or ZIP+4 Code information from the city, state and ZIP Code line, to the last line of the address.
  - a) true
  - b) false
3. When printing a delivery address, which of the following should not be abbreviated:
  - a) the state name
  - b) the street name
  - c) the suffix
  - d) the predirectional
  - e) the secondary unit designator (e.g., “Apartment”)
4. Which of the following is not an official pre- or postdirectional?
  - a) North
  - b) Southeast
  - c) Below
  - d) West
5. When dual delivery addresses are used (i.e., a PO box and street address on separate lines), the Postal Service always delivers to the post office box address.
  - a) true
  - b) false
6. The “exceptional address format” (e.g., Jane Doe or Current Resident) cannot be used on which of the following types of mail?
  - a) letter-size Standard Mail
  - b) flat-size First-Class Mail
  - c) mail with an ancillary service endorsement
  - d) all of the above
7. Any mailer can distribute mail bearing the “simplified address format” (i.e., Postal Customer) to both city delivery and rural carrier routes.
  - a) true
  - b) false

## ANSWERS TO EXERCISE 4 - 1

1. **above;** the name of the recipient should appear on the line directly above the delivery address information line(s).
2. **a, true;** if required by space constraints, the ZIP Code or ZIP+4 Code may appear, by itself, on the last line of the delivery address.
3. **b, the street name;** the street name should always be spelled out in its entirety, if at all possible.
4. **c, below;** the official directionals are North, South, East, West, Northeast, Northwest, Southeast, Southwest and are abbreviated as N, S, E, W, NE, NW, SE, SW respectively.
5. **b, false;** the Postal Service will deliver to whichever address (either PO box or physical street address) is on the line directly above the city, state, and ZIP Code line.
6. **c, mail with an ancillary service endorsement;** mailpieces requesting either their return or updated delivery address information must be addressed to a specific individual or business.
7. **b, false;** only government agencies may distribute mailpieces with the simplified address format to city carrier routes.

## BASIC STANDARDS FOR DISCOUNTED RATES

All pieces in a presorted, discounted First-Class mailing must bear a delivery address that includes the correct ZIP Code or ZIP+4 Code. Except for simplified addresses, all pieces in a Standard Mail presorted mailing must have a delivery address with the addressee's name and correct ZIP Code or ZIP+4 Code.

Except for Parcel Post, all Package Services mailpieces must also have a delivery address, including the correct ZIP Code or ZIP+4 Code. In addition, the sender's return address must appear on all Package Services mailpieces.

## ZIP+4 CODE

The most complete ZIP Code is a nine-digit number consisting of five digits, a hyphen, and four digits. The first five digits represent the ZIP Code of the delivery area. The sixth and seventh digits (the first two after the hyphen) identify a smaller geographic area called a sector. The final eighth and ninth digits identify an even smaller area of that sector called a segment.

Together, the final four digits identify such discrete geographic areas as a street side between intersections, a building, or a group of floors in a building. The ZIP+4 Code might also designate a span of boxes on a rural route, or a group of post office boxes to which a single USPS employee makes delivery.

Firms and businesses receiving large volumes of mail may be assigned a ZIP+4 Code just for their business, and no other. This type of ZIP+4 Code is referred to as a "Firm Unique" ZIP+4 Code and can be used on a business's courtesy reply mail (CRM) and letterhead.

## ADDRESS ACCURACY

The ability of the Postal Service to properly deliver a mailpiece to the intended recipient depends upon the quality of the address information. If the addressee has moved, the Postal Service may unavoidably delay, or even be forced to dispose of, the mailpiece.

Obviously, maintaining proper address list hygiene improves the deliverability of all mailpieces produced from a list. The quality of delivery depends on the accuracy of the mailing list.

### Zip Code Accuracy Requirement

The Postal Service requires mailers to verify the accuracy of their ZIP Codes for all discounted First-Class and Standard Mail mailings. You must verify the ZIP Code accuracy of the addresses in your mailings at least once a year. Mailers meet this requirement by using a USPS-approved method for ZIP Code verification. These methods are:

- List processing by CASS-certified address matching software.
- Manual verification using the current edition of Publication 65, *National Five-Digit ZIP Code and Post Office Directory*.
- Survey of the addressees.
- USPS manual list correction service (DMM A910).
- Electronic lookup on the USPS web page ([www.usps.com](http://www.usps.com)).



*A mailer certifies that they have met the ZIP Code Accuracy standard by checking a block on their postage statement.*

### CASS-Certified Address Matching Software

The Coding Accuracy Support System, or CASS, is a certification test employed by the USPS to measure the quality of address matching software. This certification is offered to mailers, service bureaus, and software vendors to ensure the accuracy of delivery point barcodes, ZIP+4 Codes, 5-digit ZIP Codes, and carrier route information.

Any mailing claimed at a discounted automation rate must be produced from address lists properly matched and coded with CASS-certified address matching software.

Mailers using privately owned Multiline Optical Character Readers (MLOCs) must obtain Multiline Accuracy Support System (MASS) certification for the address matching software used on their MLOCs. This certification is required to claim automation rates on mailpieces processed by these MLOCs.

Call the National Customer Support Center (NCSC) at 1-800-642-2914 to obtain information on how to become a CASS-certified vendor or user, or for answers to other questions concerning the CASS-certification process. A complete list of vendors is also available on our website @ <http://www.usps.com>.

### Move Update Requirement

To qualify for all First-Class Mail discounted rates the mailer must obtain current forwarding (Change of Address, COA) information for every address before they mail. Unless it is newly obtained from the customer, an address must be exposed to an address update process within 180 days of the mailing date.

This is called the “move update” requirement. This ensures that the Postal Service will not have to rehandle and redeliver mailpieces that had previously received a discount from full rate postage.

The approved methods for obtaining forwarding information are:

1. National Change of Address (NCOA)—list processing by an approved vendor.
2. FASTforward<sup>SM</sup>—an “on-piece,” on-the-fly method for private multiline optical character reader (MLOC) users.
3. FASTforward<sup>SM</sup>—another list processing method.
4. Ancillary Service Endorsement—a request for updated address information printed directly on the mailpiece.
5. Address Change Service (ACS)—an electronic format for the notification provided in #4.

Although not required to receive discounts for Standard Mail mailings, periodic use of one of these methods will enhance the deliverability of your addresses. More information on these processes is available by calling the National Customer Support Center (NCSC) at 1-800-238-3150.

## ANCILLARY SERVICE ENDORSEMENTS

This course will focus on the ancillary service endorsements as a method of meeting the move update requirement and obtaining updated address information. The use of an ancillary service endorsement also allows the

mailer to determine how the Postal Service will handle the piece if it is undeliverable.

The following chart lists the ancillary service endorsements that meet the “move update” requirements for First-Class Mail discounts. The table cross references the handling of Undeliverable-as-Addressed (UAA) mail for First-Class Mail and Standard Mail (A) pieces.

### USPS HANDLING OF MAILER ENDORSED UAA MAILPIECES

ENDORSEMENT	FIRST CLASS	STANDARD MAIL
Return Service Requested	If UAA, mailpiece returned with new address or reason for non-delivery attached; no charge.	Piece returned with reason for non-delivery attached; First-Class single piece rate charged.
Temp-Return Service Requested	Same as above, except mailpiece forwarded and not returned when addressee is only “Temporarily Away”	<b>Not Available</b> for Standard Mail
Address Service Requested	<p><b>Months 1 thru 12;</b> piece forwarded, separate address correction notice provided; address correction fee charged.</p> <p><b>Months 13 thru 18;</b> piece returned with new address attached; no charge.</p> <p><b>After month 18</b> or if undeliverable; piece returned with reason for nondelivery attached; no charge.</p>	<p><b>Months 1 thru 12;</b> piece forwarded, separate address correction notice provided; address correction fee charged.</p> <p><b>Months 13 thru 18;</b> piece returned with new address; weighted fee charged*</p> <p><b>After month 18</b> or if undeliverable; piece returned with reason for nondelivery; weighted fee charged*</p>
Change Service Requested	<p><u>Valid for Address Change Service (ACS) participants only.</u> Separate notice of new address or reason for non-delivery provided; address correction fee charged, <b>piece disposed of</b> by USPS.</p> <p>(not available for Priority Mail or mail with special services)</p>	Separate notice of new address or reason for non-delivery provided; address correction fee charged, <b>Piece disposed of</b> by USPS.

**!** When choosing an ancillary service option, do not underestimate the charges for returned items, particularly those returning at the weighted fee!

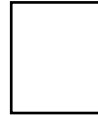
\* Weighted Fee is the First-Class single piece rate (based on weight) multiplied by 2.472. This fee compensates the Postal Service not only for returned pieces, but also for forwarding costs on the pieces that are not returned.



## ANCILLARY SERVICE ENDORSEMENT LOCATIONS

USPS  
475 L'ENFANT PLZ SW  
WASHINGTON DC 20260-6800  
RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED<sup>1</sup>

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED<sup>3</sup>



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED<sup>4</sup>

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED<sup>2</sup>

NATIONAL CUSTOMER SUPPORT CENTER  
UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE  
6060 PRIMACY PKWY STE 201  
MEMPHIS TN 38188-0001

**Location**

You may print the endorsements in one of the following locations:

1. Immediately below the return address.
2. Immediately above the delivery address.
3. Immediately to the left of the postage area, below any rate marking.
4. Immediately below the postage area and any rate marking.

You must print an ancillary service endorsement such as "Address Service Requested" in at least 8-point type. Maintain a minimum 1/4 inch clear space around (above, below, and to both sides) the endorsement to ensure legibility.

The Postal Service requires a return address on the same side of the piece bearing the ancillary service endorsement. Orient the endorsement so that it reads in the same direction as the return address.

Maintain a reasonable degree of color contrast between the endorsement and the background of the piece. Brilliant envelopes and reverse printing are not permitted. Do not confuse mailer endorsements as described here, with postal endorsements made with hand stamp, pen, or pencil to indicate reasons for nondelivery.

**Undeliverable-As-Addressed Package Services**

Except for Bound Printed Matter, unendorsed Package Services must be either forwarded or returned as applicable by regulation; it may not be disposed of. If this mail is received at the wrong post office because it has an incorrect ZIP Code, it is not transported to the correct delivery unit. Unendorsed, undeliverable Bound Printed Matter, however, is disposed of as waste.

Correctly addressed, unendorsed Package Services that is misdirected or has the wrong sack label is redirected to the correct unit for delivery. This is just another example of the importance of address quality on your mailpieces.

Maintain the quality and the deliverability of your address lists using at least one of the options available. The Postal Service requires the use of one of the approved methods for all discounted First-Class mailings.

Ancillary Service Endorsements cannot be used on mailpieces with an exceptional address format (i.e. Jane Doe or Current Resident). The complete rules and regulations governing the forwarding and return of mail for all classes are contained in *Domestic Mail Manual*, DMM F010.



*Don't forget the 1/4 inch clearance requirement. This is a common error. The USPS cannot guarantee proper handling if you do not meet this requirement. In addition, an "Exception to Regulation" is required before mailing.*

**EXERCISE 4 - 2**

Directions: Circle the best response or fill in the blank to answer the following questions. Check your answers when you have completed the exercise.

1. All pieces in discounted Standard Mail and First-Class Mail presorted mailings must bear a delivery address including the correct ZIP Code.
  - a) true
  - b) false
2. Mailers are required to use an approved method of verifying the accuracy of the 5-digit ZIP Codes in all discounted First-Class Mail and Standard Mail mailings.
  - a) true
  - b) false
3. All mailings at automated (prebarcoded) rates must be produced from address lists that have been processed using CASS-certified software.
  - a) true
  - b) false
4. Which of the following is an approved method for obtaining the current forwarding information necessary to meet the "move update" requirements for discounted First-Class Mail?
  - a) list processing by CASS-certified software
  - b) National Change of Address (NCOA) list processing
  - c) a survey of the addressees
  - d) all of the above
5. Which ancillary service endorsement is not a valid method for meeting the "move update" requirement for First-Class Mail?
  - a) Return Service Requested
  - b) Forwarding Service Requested
  - c) Address Service Requested
6. Which of the following is a proper location on the face of a mailpiece for an ancillary service endorsement?
  - a) immediately below the return address
  - b) immediately above the delivery address
  - c) immediately below the postage area and rate markings
  - d) all of the above
7. Ancillary service endorsements such as "Address Service Requested" must be printed in at least \_\_\_\_\_ point type with a \_\_\_\_\_ inch clear space above and below the endorsement.

## ANSWERS TO EXERCISE 4 - 2

1. **a, true;** partially addressed pieces or pieces with an incorrect ZIP or ZIP+4 Code are not acceptable for mailing at the discounted Standard Mail or First-Class Mail rates of postage.
2. **a, true;** the approved methods are: list processing via CASS-certified software, manual verification using the National Five-Digit ZIP Code Directory, survey of the addressees, USPS manual list correction service, and electronic lookup on the USPS web page ([www.usps.com](http://www.usps.com)).
3. **a, true;** only electronic list processing via CASS-certified software is a valid method of applying ZIP+4 information to a database for prebarcoded discounts.
4. **b, National Change of Address (NCOA) list processing;** NCOA processing returns updated forwarding information, along with ZIP+4, delivery point, and carrier route information. Because it is CASS-certified, this processing is also a valid method of applying ZIP+4 information for prebarcoded discounts. NCOA processing is conducted by USPS licensed vendors.
5. **b, Forwarding Service Requested;** since the piece is forwarded for months 1-12, this service does not return to the mailer the updated address information necessary to meet this requirement.
6. **d, all of the above;** all of these are valid positions for an ancillary service endorsement.
7. **8, 1/4;** both requirements ensure legibility. If these requirements are not met, the Postal Service cannot guarantee that the service will be rendered as requested.

## RETURN ADDRESS

A clear, correct, return address indicates to the USPS where the sender of a mailpiece wants it returned if it cannot be delivered. The USPS also uses the return address to provide ancillary services requested by the mailer (such as "Address Service Requested").

Clearly visible mailer endorsements ensure that letter carriers provide the service requested. Design mailpieces with the delivery address, return address, endorsement, and postage payment all clearly visible and printed in the same direction.

### Elements of the Return Address

The return address contains elements corresponding to those used in the destination address. From top to bottom, the return address may contain a nonaddress data line, an information/attention line, the name of recipient line, the delivery address line, and the post office (city), state, and ZIP Code line.

The name of the sender is not required in the return address unless specifically prescribed. An example of when the name of the sender is required is when using registered mail.

However, when the name of the sender is not included as part of the return address, be sure to include a clear designation such as apartment, suite, or room number to ensure proper handling for ancillary services and/or return of the mailpiece.

Ideally, the ink used to preprint the return address on letter-size mail should not be darker than the ink used to print the delivery address, especially on smaller envelopes. A return address that is more prominent (darker) and a larger font size than the delivery address can cause the OCR to read and misroute the mailpiece back to the return address.

## Required Use of a Return Address and Sender's Name

The mailer's actual return address and name must appear legibly on:

- Mail of any class, when its return is requested.
- Mail of any class when an ancillary service endorsement is used.
- Official mail (government mail).
- Mail bearing precanceled stamps.
- Mail bearing a company permit imprint.
- Priority Mail.
- Periodicals in envelopes or wrappers.
- Package Services (Parcel Post, Bound Printed Matter, Media Mail, and Library Mail).
- Registered mail.
- Insured mail.
- COD mail.
- Certified mail, if a return receipt is requested.
- Express Mail, if a return receipt is requested (the return address on the Express Mail label satisfies this requirement).

### One Post Office Name

Postal regulations prohibit a return address from including more than one post office name. Therefore, mailpieces with more than one return address from different cities are not acceptable for mailing under any condition.

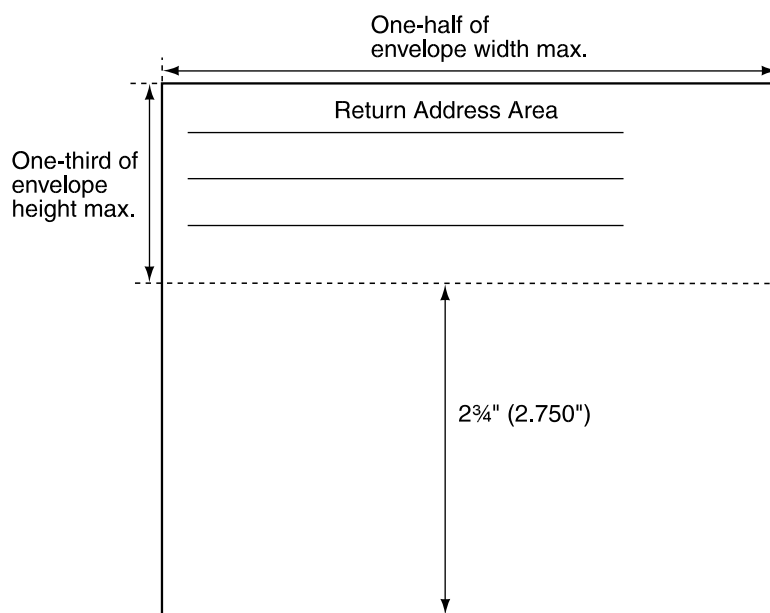
### Location

The return address should appear in the top left corner of the address side, or address area, of the mailpiece, parallel to the delivery address; the return address should not appear on the reverse side of a mailpiece.

When properly placed on a letter-size mailpiece, the return address should extend no more than half the length of the mailpiece from left to right, and no more than one-third the height of the mailpiece from top to bottom.

Additionally, the return address should be at least 2 3/4 inches above the bottom edge of the mailpiece.

### RETURN ADDRESS BLOCK LOCATION FOR LETTER-SIZE MAILPIECES



*Publication 28: Postal Addressing Standards, is a complete reference for all types of addresses. Contact your local post office for a copy of this comprehensive guide.*

### SUMMARY

The use of a complete, correct and properly formatted delivery address is crucial to the timely delivery of your mailpieces. The Postal Service offers a number of methods to help ensure that the addresses in your database and on your mailpieces are current. In addition, through the use of ancillary service endorsements, you can designate how you want the USPS to handle any mailpieces that are Undeliverable-As-Addressed (UAA).

The intent of this module is to provide you with working knowledge of the factors that affect proper delivery addressing. Publication 28; *Postal Addressing Standards*, is the definitive, "must-have" postal resource for anyone involved in address database management and address printing for mailing.



### EXERCISE 4 - 3

Directions: Circle the best response or fill in the blank to answer the following questions. Check your answers when you have completed the exercise.

1. The elements of a proper return address are the same as those of a properly formatted \_\_\_\_\_ address.
2. The actual name of the sender is required to appear in all return addresses.
  - a) true
  - b) false
3. The sender's actual name and return address is required on any mailpiece:
  - a) sent as presorted First-Class Mail
  - b) sent at presorted Standard Mail rates
  - c) bearing an ancillary service endorsement
  - d) bearing a simplified address
4. Depending on postage payment method, the sender's name and return address is generally not required to appear on any mailpiece sent as:
  - a) Priority Mail
  - b) Package Services
  - c) Standard Mail
  - d) Registered Mail
5. A return address should appear in the top \_\_\_\_\_ corner of the address side or address area of the mailpiece, \_\_\_\_\_ to the delivery address.
6. On a letter-size mailpiece, the entire return address should be located at least:
  - a) 2 inches above the bottom edge of the mailpiece
  - b) 2 1/4 inches above the bottom edge of the mailpiece
  - c) 2 1/2 inches above the bottom edge of the mailpiece
  - d) 2 3/4 inches above the bottom edge of the mailpiece
  - e) 3 inches above the bottom edge of the mailpiece
7. On a letter-size mailpiece, the entire return address should be no more than:
  - a) one-half the length of the mailpiece
  - b) one-third the length of the mailpiece
  - c) one-half the height of the mailpiece
  - d) one-third the height of the mailpiece
  - e) both a and d
  - f) both b and c

## ANSWERS TO EXERCISE 4 - 3

1. **delivery**; a return address consists of the same elements as a delivery address including a recipient line, a delivery address line, and a city, state, and ZIP Code line.
2. **b, false**; the name of the sender is only required to appear under certain circumstances. However, if the actual name of the sender is not used, then any pertinent secondary information, such as apartment or suite number, is required.
3. **c, bearing an ancillary service endorsement**; without the sender's name and return address, the USPS cannot render the service requested in the mailer endorsement.
4. **c, sent as Standard Mail**; under normal circumstances, the sender's name and return address is not required to appear on mailpieces sent as presorted Standard Mail.
5. **left, parallel**; this is the general standard for return address location.
6. **d, 2 3/4 inches above the bottom edge of the mailpiece**; this helps ensure that the OCR will not mistake the return address for the delivery address.
7. **e, both a and d**; this ensures that the return address does not dominate the face of the mailpiece and so obscure the efficient location of the delivery address.

One of the best ways for mailers to save money and ensure timely and efficient postal handling is to submit qualifying automation rate mailings. The Postal Service provides worksharing discounts to mailers who can presort and prebarcode their mail. Qualifying prebarcoded mailpieces enjoy significant postage discounts, especially for large volume mailings, and provide for accurate and fast processing on high speed barcode sorters in postal facilities.

The Postal Service now offers discounts for letters, flats, and machinable parcels that bear a qualifying barcode and meet the required physical specifications. This module covers the specifications and printing requirements of all barcodes for which the Postal Service offers discounts to mailers.



## WHAT YOU WILL LEARN ABOUT USPS BARCODES

Upon completion of this module, you should be able to do the following:

- Define the **purpose** and **structure** of a POSTNET barcode.
- Describe the difference between a ZIP+4 barcode and a delivery point barcode.
- Describe how the delivery point numbers are derived.
- Interpret a POSTNET barcode to maintain quality control.
- Describe the types of barcodes used for prebarcoding parcels.
- Discuss the dimensional tolerances and the technical considerations for printing barcodes of all types.



## POSTNET BARCODE

In 1980 the Postal Service invented a unique barcoding method called POSTNET, for POSTal Numeric Encoding Technique. The POSTNET barcode is a graphic method of encoding ZIP+4 information. The POSTNET barcode is used for sortation of letter and flat-size mail.

### Producing Barcodes For Your Mail

Every mailpiece in an automation rate mailing must bear a qualifying barcode. Letter- and flat-size mailpieces require POSTNET barcodes. Software and hardware that can preprint a barcode on your mail is available from various manufacturers at a relatively low cost. Some types of equipment can print a barcode on your envelope insert and allow the barcode to show through a window.

Other equipment can print barcodes on labels and allow you to apply the barcoded labels to your mailpieces. Addressing machines range from small desktop units to sophisticated add-on adapters for large mail stuffing/folding/labeling machines.

Under the concept of worksharing, you can benefit from the largest allowable discounts on your domestic mail, if you can successfully produce qualifying barcodes and meet all other automation and presort requirements.

Publication 95, *Quick Service Guide*, provides a thorough overview of mail preparation requirements. See QSG 140 and QSG 640 for descriptions of the preparation for First-Class Mail and Standard Mail automation letters.



**QSG 140, 640**

### Barcode Benefits

Once the barcode is applied, it can be read by the more efficient barcode sorters (BCS). Letter-size mail bearing a delivery point barcode bypasses the more complex optical character reader (OCR) and the postal handling associated with OCR processing, saving time and money for you and the Postal Service.

The benefits of preprinting accurate, qualifying barcodes on your mailpieces include the following:

- Faster mail processing.
- Reduction in postage costs for the mailer.
- Reduction in operating costs for the Postal Service (which promotes rate stability).
- More consistent delivery times and decrease in misdeliveries.

## POSTNET BARCODE

The POSTNET barcode represents the digits of the ZIP+4 Code (required for automation rate flat-size mail) and the delivery point code (required for automation rate letter-size mail) for the delivery address on the mailpiece.

The POSTNET delivery point barcode is usually unique for each address in the mailing, and provides the most efficient way in the modern postal system to sort a mailpiece to its final destination.

### Delivery Point Barcode

A delivery point barcode provides the Postal Service with the ability to uniquely identify the precise delivery point of a given mailpiece and to sort the mail in delivery sequence using a barcode sorter (BCS). The correct delivery point barcode must be derived from a CASS-certified delivery point code address matching process.

The ZIP+4 Code typically represents a "street side," "block face," or group of houses on a street, but does not represent any particular house on the block. The delivery point barcode is formed by adding 2 additional digits to the basic ZIP+4 barcode.

By adding the last two digits of the house number to the existing 9-digit ZIP+4 code, a unique barcode can be derived that represents one exact house. All residential delivery point barcodes are derived using this simple concept. For post office box addresses, the Postal Service typically uses the last two digits of the box number (e.g., BOX 34007 has delivery point digits of 0 and 7).

The complete set of delivery point derivation rules are given in DMM C840.

## STRUCTURE OF A POSTNET BARCODE

A POSTNET delivery point barcode is made up of tall bars and short bars. The bars are arranged in sets of five to represent the digits in the ZIP+4 Code and the delivery point. Each digit is represented by a different configuration of these five bars.

All ZIP Codes currently in use can be represented by placing five bar combinations, one after the other, in linear fashion (see illustration). The entire barcode can be printed in the lower right corner of a letter-size mailpiece or in the address block.

Each digit in the ZIP+4 Code, and the delivery point numbers, is represented by five bars, as mentioned above, always in a combination of two tall bars and three short bars. By adding the positional values of the two tall bars and ignoring the positional values of the three short bars, the five-bar POSTNET barcode can represent any digit from 0 through 9.

### Frame Bars

Every POSTNET barcode begins and ends with two tall frame bars. They are the first bar and the last bar in a POSTNET barcode. They serve no purpose other than as end markers for the barcode itself. They denote where the numeric ZIP+4 Code information encoded in the barcode begins and ends.

### Correction Character

The last number encoded in every barcode is a correction character. This is in addition to the ZIP+4 Code information, and is appended at the end, just before the last frame bar. The correction character serves as an on-the-fly check digit for the barcode sorters and is used to confirm the accuracy of the barcode information as read by the machinery.

The correction character is derived by adding the sum of all the numbers encoded in the barcode and subtracting that number from the next whole integer of 10.

Ex:

ZIP+4 Code = 11011-9000

$$1 + 1 + 0 + 1 + 1 + 9 + 0 + 0 + 0 = \underline{13}$$

Since the sum is 13, then the next whole integer of 10 is 20. (If the sum had been 23, then the next whole integer of 10 would have been 30. And so on....)

$$20 - \underline{13} = 7$$

Therefore, for this example, the proper correction character for this POSTNET ZIP+4 barcode would be 7. The number would be encoded in the last set of five tall and short bars, just before the final tall frame bar.

### POSTNET Delivery Point Barcode

A POSTNET Delivery Point Barcode encodes two additional characters following the ZIP+4 Code information. This type of barcode is required for letter-size automation discounts, and optional for flat-sized.

The delivery point characters, combined with the ZIP+4 information, uniquely identify the precise delivery point of a given mailpiece. This allows the Postal Service to sort the mail in delivery sequence using a barcode sorter (BCS). The two delivery point characters are typically the last two digits of the primary street or box number of the delivery address.

The delivery point characters are added to the barcode at the end of the ZIP+4 Code information, prior to the correction character, and are included in the sum used to derive the correction character.

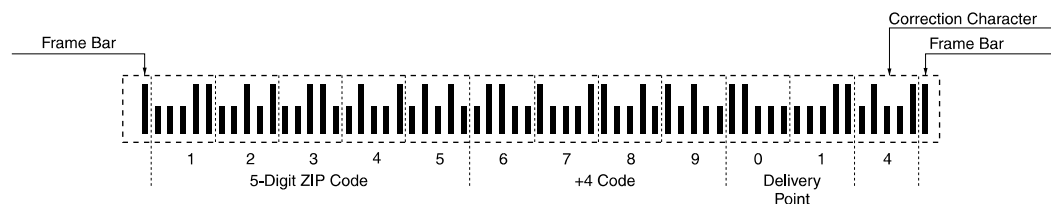
A proper delivery point barcode consists of 62 bars.

Zip+4 Code information	9 sets of 5 bars =	45
Delivery point	2 sets of 5 bars =	10
Correction character	1 set of 5 bars =	5
Frame bars	2 sets of 1 bar =	2
total 62		



Count the total number of bars for a "quick check." If they total 62, it's likely to be a qualifying delivery point barcode!

### POSTNET DELIVERY POINT BARCODE

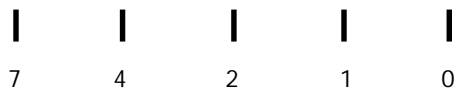


## POSTNET BARCODE SYMBOLOGY

The POSTNET barcode is a 2 of 5 code using positional weights. Each numeral encoded in the barcode is represented by a set of 5 tall or short bars. Each bar in this set of 5 has a numeric “weight” or “value” based on its position. The value of the position is turned on when the space is occupied by a tall bar.

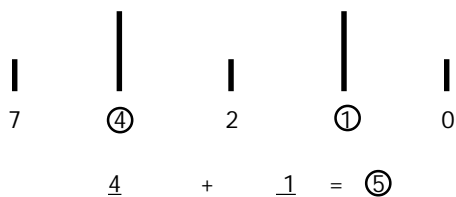
The positional weights are shown below. The first position or bar has a value of 7. The second position has a value of 4, the third position has a value of 2, the fourth position has a value of 1, and the fifth position has a value of 0.

The positional weights are a constant and never change. These values are only active or turned on when the position is occupied by a tall bar.



Only 2 positions or values are ever active in any set of 5 bars, hence the designation “2 of 5 code.” So, each number in a ZIP+4 Code, as encoded in a POSTNET ZIP+4 barcode, is represented by a set of 2 tall and 3 short bars. The number itself is derived by adding the numeric value of the 2 active positions, or tall bars.

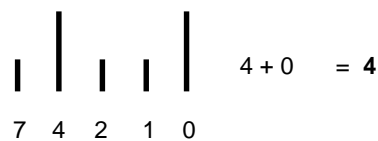
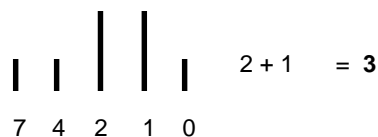
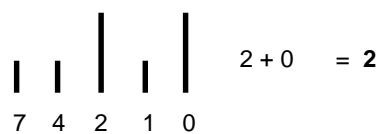
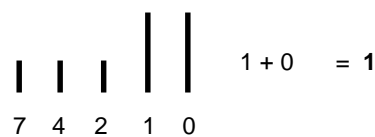
Ex.



In the preceding example, the two bars occupying the positions with a value of 4 and 1 are tall. Therefore, the numeric values of these positions are active. The number encoded by each set of 5 bars is derived by adding the numeric values of the active positions (indicated by the 2 tall bars). Therefore, the number encoded by the set of 2 tall and 3 short bars in the example is 5.

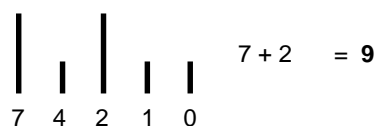
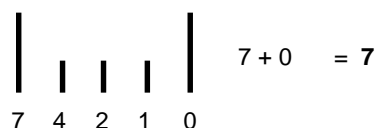
All single digit numerals from 0 to 9 can be represented by this process. The only numeral that does not decode logically by this method is 0. Since there is only one position with a value of 0, it cannot be added to itself. Therefore, 0 is derived by adding the positional values of 7 and 4, which derives no other useful single digit number.

## POSTNET SYMBOLOGY





Notice 64, the large clear template included in your course materials has an overlay marked "POSTNET Decoder", that can be used to divide a barcode into 5 bar segments to help you manually decode the ZIP+4 information.



All ZIP+4 Codes currently in use can be represented by placing these 5 bar combinations, one after the other, in a linear fashion. Each set of 5 bars represents one of the numbers in the ZIP+4 Code.

### Delivery Point Information

The 2 digits of delivery point information in a delivery point barcode are appended on the barcode immediately following the encoded ZIP+4 information. The delivery point information is represented by an additional 10 bars, for a total of 62, including the frame bars.

The correction character continues to be encoded in the last set of 5 bars in a delivery point barcode. The delivery point digits are included in the calculation to derive the correction character, along with the ZIP+4 information.

### BARCODE ACCURACY

It is important that the POSTNET barcodes on your mail meet the barcode print specifications discussed later in this module. It is equally important that the barcode accurately represents the delivery address. An incorrect or improperly printed barcode can result in the mailpiece being missorted. These inaccuracies cause extra costs and processing steps for the Postal Service, as well as delays in the delivery of the mail.

### CASS-Certified Software

To prevent such errors, all mailers claiming automation rates must use USPS approved Coding Accuracy Support System (CASS) certified software to derive the ZIP+4 and delivery point information used to print barcodes on their mailpieces. This ensures that the address information encoded in the barcode is accurate.

All letter-and flat-sized mailings entered at the automation rates must be accompanied by a Form 3553, *CASS Summary Report*. This report shows that CASS-certified software has been used to match the addresses in the mailer's addresses against the USPS's ZIP+4 national database. The software matching process must have taken place within 6 months of the date of mailing.

This guarantees that the barcodes from which the USPS derives its workshare savings are accurate, and will not cause the Postal Service any additional handling.

You may request a list of vendors of CASS-certified software from your local postal business center. Purchase of the software will allow you to perform the required matching process on your own computer. Alternatively, you may choose to use the services of a professional list broker or mailing house who will process your database for you.

**EXERCISE 5 - 1**

Directions: Circle the best response or fill in the blank to answer the following questions. Check your answers when you have completed the exercise.

1. Every mailpiece in an automation rate mailing must bear a qualifying barcode.
  - a) true
  - b) false
2. If you prebarcode your mail, the mailpiece usually skips the initial OCR processing step and goes directly to the \_\_\_\_\_ sorter.
3. The first and last bars of the barcode are called \_\_\_\_\_ bars.
4. The sum of the 12 digits (the ZIP+4 Code, the delivery point information, and the correction character) encoded in a delivery point barcode must always equal a multiple of \_\_\_\_\_.
5. The correction character in a barcode that reads 20852-182915 is \_\_\_\_\_.
6. Each set of 5 bars in a POSTNET barcode consists of 2 \_\_\_\_\_ bars and 3 \_\_\_\_\_.
7. What does CASS-certified software do?
  - a) applies ZIP+4 information to an address database
  - b) provides a ready made address database for barcode testing
  - c) **C**odes **A**nd **S**ends **S**amples of a product by mail
  - d) allows a database to be delivered in house-by-house sequence

## ANSWERS TO EXERCISE 5 - 1

1. **a, true**; 100 percent of the pieces in a prebarcoded discount mailing must bear a qualifying barcode.
2. **barcode**; benefits of prebarcoding include faster and more efficient mail processing, reduction in postage costs, and more consistent delivery times with fewer misdeliveries.
3. **frame**; the frame bars denote the beginning and the end of the numeric information encoded in the POSTNET barcode.
4. **10**; the correction character is used on-the-fly by the barcode sorters to validate the information decoded from the barcode.
5. **7**;  $2+0+8+5+2+1+8+2+9+1+5 = 43$ . The next whole integer of 10 is 50. Therefore, the correction character must be 7 ( $43+\underline{7}=50$ ).
6. **tall, short**; the numerals encoded in a POSTNET barcode are derived by adding the positional values of the 2 tall bars out of every set of 5 tall and short bars. Therefore, 2 tall and 3 short bars comprise each set of 5 bars.
7. **a, applies ZIP+4 information to an address database**; the ZIP+4 and delivery point information derived by CASS-certified address matching software is required prior to printing POSTNET barcodes for USPS discounts.

## BARCODE PRINTING REQUIREMENTS

In order to qualify for USPS prebarcoding discounts, your preprinted POSTNET barcodes (and the material they are printed upon) must meet the following technical requirements:

### Print Reflectance Difference

USPS barcode sorters respond to the difference between the amount of light reflected by the ink used to print the barcode, versus the amount of light reflected from the background paper on which the barcode is printed. This difference is defined as print reflectance difference (PRD). A PRD of at least 30 percent in the red and green portions of the optical spectrum is necessary for the satisfactory reading of POSTNET barcodes.

The BCS responds best when the barcode is printed in black ink (which *absorbs* the maximum amount of light) on a white background (which *reflects* the maximum amount of light). Black ink on a white background creates the greatest PRD. Other color combinations may qualify and can be measured using a USPS-certified envelope reflectance meter. Contact your local mailpiece design analyst for testing to ensure compliance with the 30 percent minimum PRD.

### Background Reflectance

The background of the paper where the delivery point barcode is to be placed should be uniform in color and have a reflectance of at least 50 percent in the red and 45 percent in the green portions of the optical spectrum. White and pastel colors generally satisfy this requirement. Compliance with this requirement is also measured using an envelope reflectance meter.

### Extraneous Background Matter

The background (envelope, card, insert, etc.) on which the delivery point barcode is printed must not contain dark fibers or background patterns with a print contrast ratio (PCR) of more than 15 percent (such backgrounds tend to be interpreted as bar patterns by the BCS).

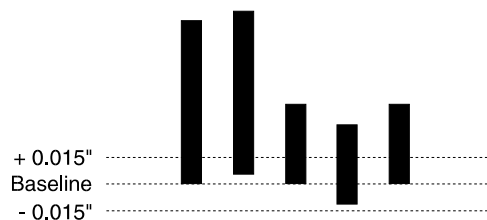
This requirement extends to envelope insert or security pattern show-through, within the clear area surrounding the barcode. Print contrast ratio (PCR) is measured by a USPS or USPS-licensed envelope reflectance meter.

### Baseline Shift

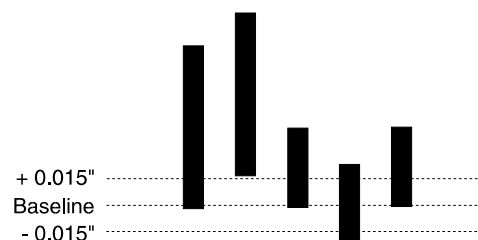
The vertical position of adjacent bars must not vary more than 0.015 inch from bar to bar when measured from the baseline (bottom) of the barcode.

#### BARCODE BASELINE SHIFT

- Acceptable Baseline Shift



- Unacceptable Baseline Shift





## POSTNET BARCODE DIMENSIONAL

### Tolerances

Print the individual bars of the barcode within the dimensional tolerances listed in the following tables.

#### Tall Bar

		<u>Tolerance</u>
<b>Height</b>	0.125 inch	$\pm 0.010$ inch
<b>Width</b>	0.020 inch	$\pm 0.005$ inch

#### Short Bar

		<u>Tolerance</u>
<b>Height</b>	0.050 inch	$\pm 0.010$ inch
<b>Width</b>	0.020 inch	$\pm 0.005$ inch

### Horizontal Spacing

$22 \pm 2$  bars per inch.

#### Pitch (center to center)

minimum	0.0416 inch
maximum	0.050 inch

#### White Space (between bars)

minimum	0.012 inch
maximum	0.040 inch

When printing barcodes on your mailpieces, ensure that the bars meet the minimum standards but do not exceed the maximums. The Postal Service's mailpiece design analyst (MDA) will use a magnifying, scribed eyepiece called a reticle to verify these tolerances. Contact your local MDA for a review of your prebarcoded samples.

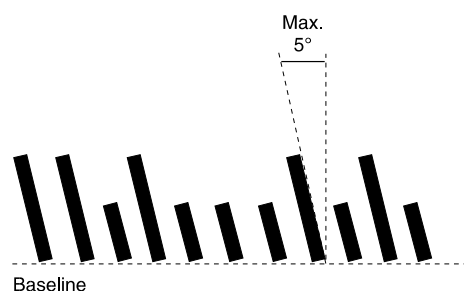


*Notice 67; Automation Template, also includes lines for measuring skew; scribed at plus and minus 5 degrees.*

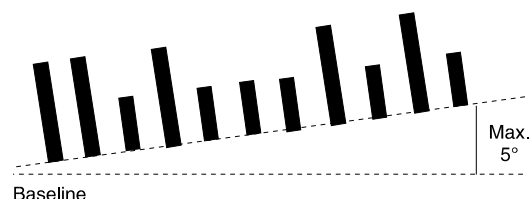
### Bar Tilt

Two types of bar tilt can occur when printing barcodes on mailpieces. Pattern skew occurs when the entire barcode pattern is not precisely parallel to the bottom edge of the mailpiece. Bar rotation occurs when individual bars are tilted (not perpendicular) with respect to the baseline of the barcode pattern itself.

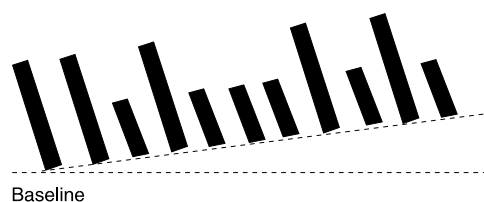
#### BAR ROTATION



#### PATTERN SKEW



#### COMBINED TILT



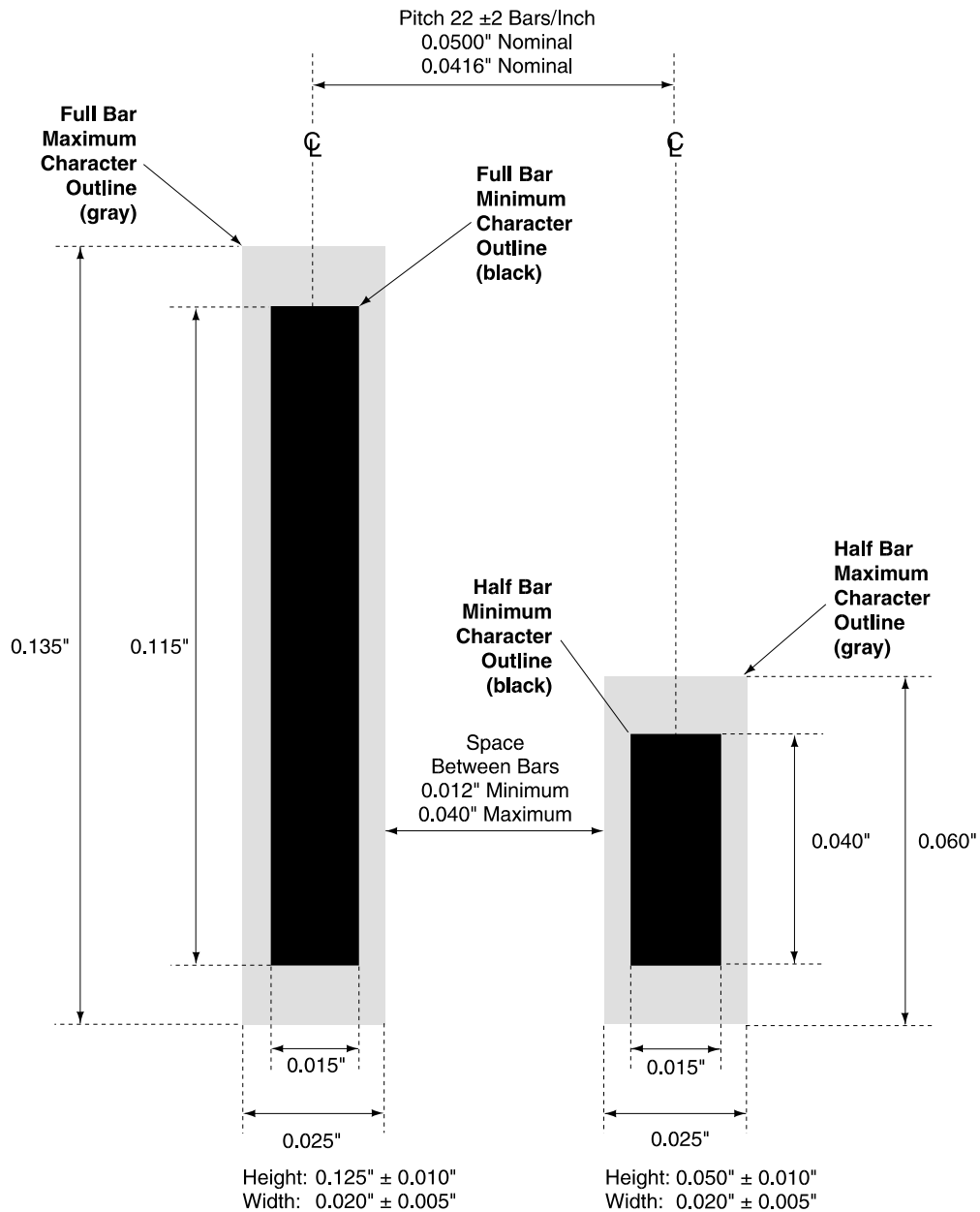
### Bar Tilt on Letter-Size Mail

The combined pattern skew and bar rotation is to be limited to a maximum tilt of the bars (as they appear on the mailpiece) of  $\pm 5$  degrees.

### Bar Tilt on Flat-Size Mail

On flat-size mail, the bar rotation must not exceed  $\pm 10$  degrees. Pattern skew is not a requirement for flat-size mail.

## POSTNET BARCODE TOLERANCES



## Printing Irregularities

Ensure that extraneous ink or ink voids do not cause any bar to fail to meet the dimension and spacing requirements.

## Excess Ink

Excess ink can prevent a barcode sorter from successfully interpreting the barcode.

### OVERINKING

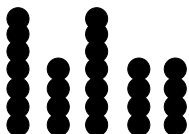


*USPS BMEU personnel use a piece of equipment called the Automated Barcode Evaluator (ABE) to verify barcode quality for acceptance. Contact your local MDA for a demonstration.*

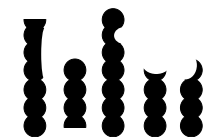
## Voids

Lack of proper ink coverage may cause a barcode to be less than the minimum required dimensions.

### IDEAL



### UNACCEPTABLE





## EXERCISE 5 - 2

Directions: Circle the best response or fill in the blank to answer the following questions. Check your answers when you have completed the exercise.

1. The difference between the amount of light reflected by the ink used to print a barcode and the amount of light reflected by the background paper is referred to as the \_\_\_\_\_ reflectance difference (PRD).
2. In order to qualify for USPS barcoded discounts, you must maintain a PRD, in the red and green spectrums, of at least:
  - a) 20 percent
  - b) 30 percent
  - c) 40 percent
  - d) 50 percent
3. Extraneous printing, background patterns, or "bleed through" in the area where the barcode is printed must not create a print contrast ratio (PCR), as measured by a USPS envelope reflectance meter, of more than:
  - a) 5 percent
  - b) 10 percent
  - c) 15 percent
  - d) 20 percent
4. The bottom edge of all bars in a barcode must rest on a common baseline, within a tolerance of plus or minus 0.015 inches above or below this baseline.
  - a) true
  - b) false
5. The horizontal spacing of the bars in a barcode must be a minimum of \_\_\_\_\_ bars per inch to a maximum of \_\_\_\_\_ bars per inch.
6. Your local mailpiece design analyst can measure the individual bar print tolerances required by the USPS using a:
  - a) magnifying glass
  - b) ruler
  - c) reticle
  - d) micrometer
7. Two types of bar tilt that can occur when printing barcodes on mailpieces are pattern \_\_\_\_\_ and bar \_\_\_\_\_.

## ANSWERS TO EXERCISE 5 - 2

1. **Print**; the greatest PRD is generated using black ink on a white background.
2. **b, 30 percent**; a 30 percent PRD, as measured by a USPS envelope reflectance meter is required for postal prebarcoding discounts.
3. **c, 15 percent**; extraneous printing with a PCR greater than 15 percent may interfere with the correct interpretation of a barcode by USPS barcode sorters.
4. **a, true**; barcodes comprised of individual bars printed outside this tolerance may not be recognized as barcodes by USPS barcode sorters.
5. **20, 24**; all bars in a qualifying POSTNET barcode must be printed with a spacing of  $22 \pm 2$  bars per inch.
6. **c, a reticle**; the MDA uses a scribed, magnifying eyepiece called a reticle to measure the bar printing and spacing tolerances specified by USPS regulations.
7. **skew, rotation**; the tilt of the entire barcode's baseline to the edge of the mailpiece is called pattern skew. The tilt of individual bars to the barcode's baseline is called bar rotation.

## PARCEL BARCODES

The prebarcoded discount the USPS offers for Standard Mail (B) machinable parcels is based on the application of a qualifying parcel barcode. The barcoded discount reflects the workhour savings for parcels that can be processed on BMC parcel sorters equipped with barcode readers.

Until January 10, 2004, the USPS allows four different qualifying barcode symbologies:

- UCC/EAN Code 128.
- USS Code 39.
- USS Code Interleaved 2 of 5.
- USS Code 128.

After January 10, 2004, only the UCC/EAN Code 128 symbology will be acceptable for parcel barcode discounts.

## PARCEL BARCODE STRUCTURE

Each parcel barcode encodes the 5-digit ZIP Code of the delivery address on the mailpiece. The barcode also contains additional information, depending on the symbology.

### All Symbologies Except UCC/EAN Code 128

For the USS Code 128, Code I 2/5, and Code 39 symbologies the barcode must represent the correct ZIP Code, followed by the verifier character "9." No other characters are required.

### UCC/EAN Code 128

The UCC/EAN barcode may encode either the correct ZIP Code or ZIP+4 Code for the delivery address. The ZIP Code information must be preceded by the application identifier code of "420." This code indicates that the barcode is for a domestic address.

The UCC/EAN barcode must not include the trailing verifier character "9" used with the other barcodes.

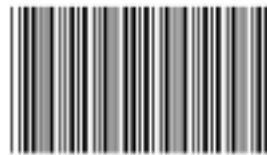
## PARCEL BARCODE SYMBOLOGIES

Each symbology uses a different method of encoding the required information. As these are privately developed industry standards, the Postal Service does not provide technical guidelines on the encoding methodology.

### UCC/EAN CODE 128



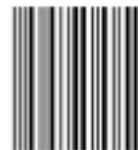
### USS CODE 39



### USS CODE 128



### USS INTERLEAVED 2 OF 5



For the technical specifications of the encoding logic for the UCC/EAN code, contact the Uniform Code Council, Inc. at:

UNIFORM CODE COUNCIL, INC  
8163 OLD YANKEE RD STE J  
DAYTON OH 45458-1839

For further information on any of the USS code specifications, contact the Automatic Identification Manufacturers at:

AUTOMATIC IDENTIFICATION  
MANUFACTURERS (AIM)  
634 ALPHA DR  
PITTSBURGH PA 15238-2802

## BARCODE PRINTING REQUIREMENTS

In order to qualify for USPS prebarcoding discounts, your preprinted parcel barcodes (and the material they are printed upon) must meet the following technical requirements:

### Print Reflectance Difference

When measured in the red spectrum, the minimum white bar (space) reflectance must be greater than 50 percent. The maximum bar reflectance must be less than 25 percent.

The minimum Print Reflectance Difference (PRD) between the white bar (spaces) and the printed bars must be at least 40 percent as measured by a USPS-specified reflectance meter.

### Background

You must print the barcode on a material that meets the optical specifications in the *AIM-USA Uniform Symbology Specifications*. White labels commonly used to print barcodes are acceptable, provided they are not glossy, nor prone to smearing.

## Dimensions

The widths of the narrow bars and spaces must be at least 0.013 inch, but no more than 0.021 inch. The preferred range is 0.015 inch to 0.017 inch. All bars must be at least 3/4 inch high.

## Ratio

The wide to narrow bar width ratio for Code I 2/5 and Code 39 must be at least 2.5 to 1.

## Quality

All parcel barcodes in a mailing must measure American National Standards Institute (ANSI) grade C or above. At least 70 percent of the barcodes must measure grade A or B. Information concerning ANSI guidelines X3.182-1990 is available from the American Standards Institute at:

AMERICAN STANDARDS INSTITUTE INC.  
11 W 42ND ST  
NEW YORK NY 10036-8002

## Human Readable Information

Unless the barcode is printed close to the address, and on the same label, the ZIP Code encoded in the barcode must be printed along with the barcode.

If the barcode is separate from the delivery address, mailers must print the human-readable equivalent of the ZIP or ZIP+4 Code (preceded by the acronym ZIP) near the barcode. Omit the verifier character and the identifier code.

Print the ZIP Code information (including the "ZIP" abbreviation) in at least 10 point type, between 1/8 inch and 1/2 inch below the barcode. Alternatively, "ZIP" may be printed in at least 12 point type, to the left of the barcode, no closer than 10 times the average narrow element, and no farther than 1/2 inch from the barcode itself.

## SUMMARY

The USPS offers barcode discounts for letter-size and flat-size mailpieces, and now, machinable parcels. The Postal Service can deliver mailer prebarcoded mailpieces more accurately and efficiently. The gain in efficiency allows the Postal Service to return worksharing savings to the mailer in the form of postage discounts.

In order to guarantee these discounts for yourself and your clients, you must ensure that your mailpieces meet the design requirements as stated in the *Domestic Mail Manual* and outlined in this guide. The next module covers the actual mailpiece design parameters and barcode positioning requirements for automated mailings.



## EXERCISE 5 - 3

Directions: Circle the best response or fill in the blank to answer the following questions. Check your answers when you have completed the exercise.

1. For prebarcoded parcel discounts, the USPS will allow mailers to use any one of the four different approved barcode symbologies until:
  - a) December 10, 2010
  - b) September 10, 2004
  - c) January 10, 2004
  - d) July 10, 2010
2. At a minimum, for the delivery address on the mailpiece, each qualifying parcel barcode must encode the correct:
  - a) 5-digit ZIP Code
  - b) Delivery Point Code
  - c) Carrier Route Code
  - d) Carrier Route Walk Sequence Number
3. The PRD for a qualifying parcel barcode must be at least:
  - a) 30 percent
  - b) 40 percent
  - c) 50 percent
  - d) 60 percent
4. If a qualifying parcel barcode is printed on a label separate from that of the delivery address, the mailer must also print, in human-readable characters:
  - a) the verifier character
  - b) the 5-digit ZIP Code or ZIP+4 Code
  - c) the identifier code
  - d) all of the above



**ANSWERS TO EXERCISE 5 - 3**

1. **c, January 10, 2004;** after this date, only the UCC/EAN Code 128 symbology will be accepted for discount.
2. **a, 5-digit ZIP Code;** or ZIP+4 Code. All of the approved symbologies require at least the ZIP or ZIP+4 Code to be encoded in the barcode. The different symbologies also require the encoding of additional information, either an identifier code or a correction character.
3. **b, 40 percent;** a PRD (the print reflectance difference between the light reflected by the printed bars versus the light reflected by the white spaces) of 40 percent is required to qualify for discount. The measurement is made by a USPS or USPS-licensed envelope reflectance meter.
4. **b, the 5-digit ZIP Code or ZIP+4 Code;** in this case, the mailer must print only the ZIP Code or ZIP+4 Code for the delivery address. Any additional information encoded in the barcode should be omitted.

To qualify for Postal Service automation discounts, the appropriate barcode from the previous module must be correctly applied to a mailpiece that meets the physical requirements for processing on the Postal Service's automated equipment. Automated processing introduces additional standards to those of the basic processing categories covered in module three. This is due to the capabilities and limitations of the equipment on which this type of mail is processed.

In this module you will learn the design and layout features required for qualification for USPS automation discounts for each processing category, including:

- Letters and cards.
- Flats.
- Machinable Parcels.

All the requirements outlined in this module must be met in order for your mailpieces to qualify for USPS automation discounts.



### **WHAT YOU WILL LEARN ABOUT AUTOMATION REQUIREMENTS FOR LETTER-SIZE MAILPIECES**

Upon completion of this portion of the module, you should be able to do the following:

- List the weight maximums for qualifying, barcoded, letter-size mailpieces.
- Describe the construction requirements for letter-size mailpieces submitted for automation discounts.
- Define the term “self-mailer” and describe the acceptable tabbing combinations.
- Describe the placement, positioning, and applicable clearances of POSTNET barcodes on letter-size mail.
- Demonstrate the usage of USPS positioning templates as design aids.

## AUTOMATION RATES FOR LETTER-SIZE MAIL

USPS automation discounts now apply only to mailpieces that are prebarcoded by the mailer. Automation rate discounts for letter-size mail require a qualifying delivery point barcode. In addition, the mailpiece itself must meet the physical requirements for automated letter sortation. This applies equally to all letter-size mailpieces, regardless of class.

Current letter mail barcode sorters (BCSSs) now feature wide area barcode readers (WABCRs) which can scan and locate a barcode across a generous portion of the face of a mailpiece. Publication 25, *Designing Letter and Reply Mail*, expands on the topics we will cover in this portion of the module.



**Pub 25, *Designing Letter and Reply Mail***

## LETTER-SIZE MAILPIECE DIMENSIONS

All letter-size mailpieces submitted for automation discounts must fall within the size standards for letter mail as previously discussed in module three, *Processing Categories*.

	Minimum	Maximum
<b>Height</b>	3 1/2 inches	6 1/8 inches
<b>Length*</b>	5 inches	11 1/2 inches
<b>Thickness</b>	0.007 inch	1/4 inch

\*Length is the dimension parallel to the address as read. Height is the dimension perpendicular to the length.

Letter-size mail which is more than 4 1/4 inches high or more than 6 inches long (card size maximums) must be at least 0.009 inch thick.

## Cards

Qualifying postcards must meet all the basic size and construction requirements for card rates as outlined in module three. Pieces formed from a single piece of cardstock that exceed the postcard-size maximum dimensions of 4 1/4 inches by 6 inches will qualify for letter-size automation rates so long as they are at least 0.009 inch thick.

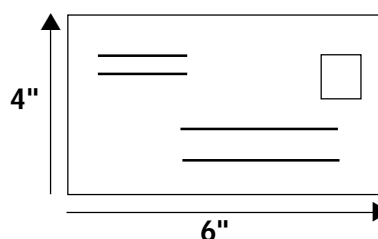
<b>Height</b>	over 4 1/4 inches
<b>Length</b>	over 6 inches
<b>Thickness*</b>	0.009 inch minimum

\*Pieces exceeding either the height or length maximums for postcards must be at least 0.009 inch thick to continue to qualify for letter-size (not card) automation rates.

## Aspect ratio

For a letter-size automation-compatible mailpiece, meeting the aspect ratio of 1.3 to 2.5 (as measured by the length of a piece divided by its height) is required. Pieces not meeting the aspect ratio requirement tend to jam USPS high-speed automated sorting equipment. If the aspect ratio of a letter-size mailpiece is not between 1.3 to 2.5, the piece is not eligible for automation discounts.

## QUALIFYING ASPECT RATIO



$$6 \div 4 = 1.5 \text{ Aspect Ratio}$$

This applies to cards equally as well, since the transport mechanism is the same. While still mailable, pieces not meeting the required aspect ratio are not eligible for automation rates.

**!** Familiarize yourself with Publication 25, *Designing Letter and Reply Mail*. It is a key reference to consult when designing a letter-size mailpiece.

## MAXIMUM WEIGHT FOR BARCODED LETTER-SIZE MAIL

The weight per piece must not be more than 3 ounces for automation First-Class Mail, Periodicals, Standard Mail (A), and automation Enhanced Carrier Route Standard Mail.

### Heavy Letter Mail

The Postal Service permits heavy letter mail (barcoded letter-size mail weighing more than 3 ounces) if the mail is prepared in envelopes, bears a delivery point barcode in the address block, and meets the physical standards in DMM C810.7.5. The maximum weight for heavy letter mail is 3.3 ounces.

If the address block barcode on a qualifying heavy letter appears in a window, the window must be covered.

## LETTER-SIZE MAILPIECE CONSTRUCTION

### General Prohibitions

The kind of high-speed sorting equipment used by the Postal Service prohibits the use of polywrap or shrinkwrap for letter-size mailpieces. Staples or saddle stitching may be used only on the bound edge (spine) of booklet-style mailpieces. Due to flexibility requirements, enclosing rigid items such as pens, pencils, or bottle caps is prohibited in letter-size automation rate mailings. The Postal Service also prohibits any protrusions that may damage mail processing equipment.

## ENVELOPES

Requirements for paper and card stock refer to minimum basis weight of the materials. Basis weight is defined as the weight (in pounds) of a ream (500 sheets) cut to a standard size for that grade.

Envelopes must be constructed of paper weighing at least 16 pounds (minimum basis weight). The specific grade of 16-pound paper required for envelopes is defined as 500 sheets measuring 17 inches by 22 inches (17 inches by 22 inches by 500 sheets).

To avoid the possibility of damage during processing or bleed through of printed information, 20-to-24 pound paper is recommended for envelopes.

## CARDS

Automation requirements for cards (mailed at card rate) and mailpieces constructed of cardstock (not mailed at card rate) are generally the same as those for letter-size mailpieces. The primary difference is the minimum thickness requirement. For all mailpieces, up to and including the maximum size for cards (4 1/4 inches high by 6 inches long), the minimum thickness is 0.007 inch. However, if a mailpiece exceeds either 4 1/4 inches in height or 6 inches in length, it must be at least 0.009 inch thick to qualify for automation rates.

Cards mailed at the card rate must be printed on paper stock with a minimum basis weight of 75 pounds (25 inches by 38 inches sheet size for 500 sheets). Maximum thickness for cards mailed at card rate is 0.016 inch. Further details on automation-compatible stamped cards, postcards, and other types of cards are in DMM C810.

## FOLDED SELF-MAILERS AND BOOKLETS

Envelopes and all other mailpieces securely sealed on all four edges provide the best assurance for successful automated processing. However, an open or folded mailpiece also qualifies for automation rates when it has been properly tabbed or sealed.

Self-mailers must be tabbed closed to prevent the open edges from fanning out during high speed processing. The standards for self-mailers are generally based on the basis weight of the paper stock and the location of the folded or bound edge.

### Paper Weights and Tabbings

The minimum basis weights indicated below are mandatory. The basis weight of paper is determined by weighing 500 sheets of paper measuring 17 inches by 22 inches; the card stock basis weight is determined by weighing 500 sheets of stock measuring 25 inches by 38 inches (DMM C810).

For a single folded sheet (sealed with one tab or glue spot) a minimum basis weight of 28 pounds (17 inches by 22 inches by 500 sheets) or 70 pounds (25 inches by 38 inches by 500 sheets).

- For two or more sheets (sealed with one tab or glue spot) a minimum basis weight of 24 pounds (17 inches by 22 inches by 500 sheets) or 60 pounds (25 inches by 38 inches by 500 sheets).
- For a single folded sheet or multiple sheets (sealed with two tabs or two glue spots) a minimum basis weight of 20 pounds (17 inches by 22 inches by 500 sheets).
- For covers of booklet-type mailings (the top edge of the mailpiece must be closed with at least two tabs) a minimum basis weight of 20 pounds (17 inches by 22 inches by 500 sheets).

## Tabs

Tabbing requirements can be met with wafer seals, spot glue, tape, or continuous glue strip. Tabs and other seals placed at the top of folded self-mailers must be positioned so that they do not cover the return address or postage information.

Tabs placed at the bottom of the self-mailer, in the barcode clear zone, must meet the standards for background reflectance (module five, *USPS Barcodes*). If the mailpiece is not barcoded, tabs in this area must also have the ability to accept USPS water-based ink. For this reason, cellophane tape is not acceptable within the barcode clear zone.

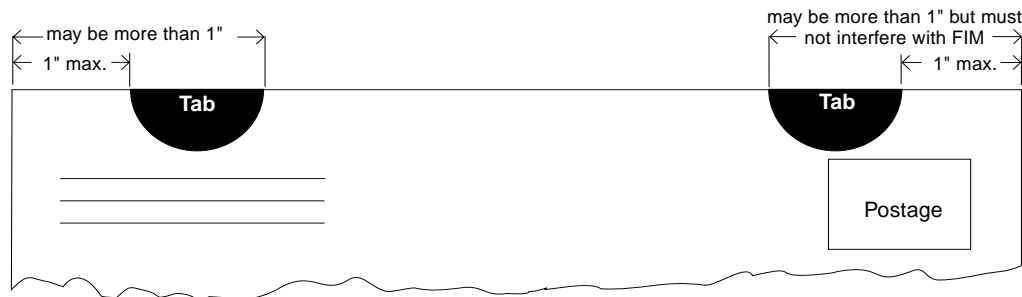
The folded edge is always *preferred* as the bottom edge for efficient processing. When two tabs are required due to location of the fold (top or bottom edge) and weight of paper stock, one tab must be placed within 1 inch of the left edge and the other tab must be placed within 1 inch of the right edge.

Adhesion requirements for tabs are detailed in DMM C810. For automation compatibility the following fastening devices are expressly prohibited:

- Clasps.
- Staples.
- String.
- Buttons.
- Wax.

Such fastening devices can cause damage to postal equipment or to other mailpieces.

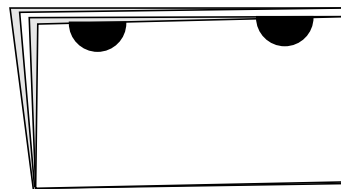
## PLACEMENT OF TABS AND WAFER SEALS



## EXAMPLES OF FOLDED SELF-MAILERS

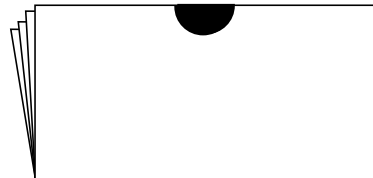
### Folded Self-Mailer

Tabs	2 (start $\leq 1$ inch from edges)
Fold	Top or Bottom
Sheets	Single
Basis Weight	20 lb.



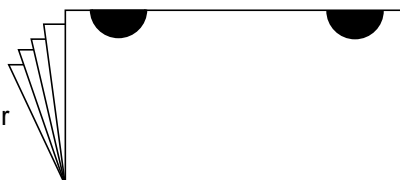
### Folded Self-Mailer

Tabs	1 (middle)
Fold	Bottom
Sheets	Multiple
Basis Weight	24 lb.



### Booklet

Tabs	2 (start $\leq 1$ inch from edges)
Spine	Bottom
Sheets	Multiple with Cover
Basis Weight	20 lb. (Cover)



### Perforated Tabs

Perforated tabs and plastic wafer seals that have become brittle and do not maintain their sealing strength are unacceptable for automation rate mailpieces. For the same reasons, perforated tabs are not acceptable closures at the bottom of the mailpiece.

When using perforated tabs, the tabs should not contain more than a 50 to 60 percent perforation (eight perforations to an inch). Tabs with 12 perforations to an inch are not allowed on self-mailers claiming automated rates.

### Other Tabbing Options

For a representative sampling of allowable self-mailer formats for tabbed or glue-sealed self-mailers, refer to Publication 95, *Quick Service Guide*, QSG 811.



#### Pub 95, QSG 811

Local MDAs can review and approve other proposed formats. Samples of mailpieces constructed of newsprint, and prepared with the final fold on the right or left edges (as opposed to top or bottom) must be submitted to the MDA for approval before full production.

Preparation of self-mailers and other tabbed pieces in these formats does not guarantee acceptance at automation letter rates. Any piece that does not meet postal machinability standards and cannot be processed on postal automated equipment may require changes in the sealing methods in order to qualify for automated discounts.

### MAILPIECE FLEXIBILITY

In addition to size, shape, and material used to create letter mail, flexibility and rigidity of the mailpiece are important. The contents of mail must be reasonably flexible to ensure proper transport through postal processing equipment.

At the same time, if your mail is too flimsy, it might catch in the metal joints of the processing equipment. Extremely flimsy or thin mailpieces also tend to stick together or adhere to other pieces easily, causing missorts and possible misdelivery of the mail.

Pens, pencils, keys, large coins, and other rigid items can damage mail and mail processing equipment; they should never be included in letter mail, and they are prohibited in letter-size mail submitted for automation rates.

Items such as credit cards and small coins firmly attached to the contents of the mailpiece are usually acceptable if the mailpiece and its contents can bend easily around an 11-inch diameter steel drum (11-inch diameter drums are used at the terminus of the USPS's automated machinery's belt transport system).

**Exercise 6 - 1**

Directions: Circle the best response to answer the following questions. Check your answers when you have completed the exercise.

1. In order to qualify for automated rates, letter-size mailpieces that are more than 4 1/4 inches high or 6 inches long must be at least:
  - a) 0.007 inch thick
  - b) 0.011 inch thick
  - c) 0.009 inch thick
  - d) 0.25 inch thick
2. If the aspect ratio of a letter-size mailpiece is not between 1.3 to 2.5, it may still qualify for prebarcoded discounts.
  - a) true
  - b) false
3. Mailpieces designed as envelopes sealed on all sides, and submitted for automated rates, must be constructed of paper with a minimum basis weight of:
  - a) 14 pounds
  - b) 16 pounds
  - c) 18 pounds
  - d) 20 pounds
4. Letter-size mailpieces submitted for prebarcoded discounts may contain rigid items such as pens or bottle caps.
  - a) true
  - b) false
5. The open end(s) of a folded self-mailer must be tabbed closed in order for the mailpiece to be eligible for prebarcoded rates.
  - a) true
  - b) false
6. Folded self-mailers eligible for prebarcoded discounts may be sealed with:
  - a) string
  - b) spot glue
  - c) staples
  - d) buttons
7. Perforated tabs are acceptable closure methods for either the top or bottom edges of self-mailers submitted at prebarcoded rates.
  - a) true
  - b) false



### ANSWERS TO EXERCISE 6 - 1

1. **c, 0.009 inch thick**; letter-size mailpieces larger than the postcard maximums must be at least 0.009 inch thick in order to maintain the necessary rigidity required for high-speed transport on USPS automated sorting equipment.
2. **b, false**; letter-size mailpieces with an aspect ratio outside this range do not qualify for automated discounts.
3. **b, 16 pounds**; as measured by a ream of 500 17-by 22-inch sheets.
4. **b, false**; rigid items in letter-size envelopes tend to jam USPS automated equipment, resulting in lost productivity and damaged mail.
5. **a, true**; if unsealed, the open edges of folded self-mailers tend to fan-out during processing, causing jams on USPS sorting equipment.
6. **b, spot glue**; in addition to spot glue, other acceptable methods of sealing include self-adhesive tabs, wafer seals, glue strips, and cellophane tape (with certain restrictions).
7. **b, false**; perforated tabs are not allowed on the bottom edges of self-mailers submitted for automated rates. Pieces in USPS letter-size automated sorting equipment are transported along the bottom edge of the mailpiece. Perforated tabs have a tendency to separate when exposed to the friction generated by this transport method.

## BARCODE PLACEMENT

The enhanced capabilities of current USPS barcode readers allow for the placement of barcodes in either of two possible locations on the face of a letter-size mailpiece. The barcode must appear either in the lower right corner of the mailpiece in the barcode clear zone, or if printed as part of the address, in the address block barcode read area.

So long as you meet the reflectance requirements described in module five, *USPS Barcodes*, you can print the barcode either on a label, an insert, or directly on the mailpiece itself.

### Barcode Clear Zone

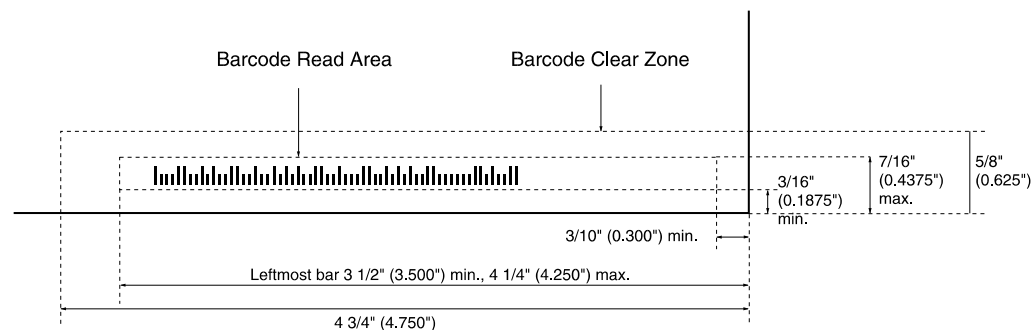
The barcode clear zone is an imaginary rectangle in the lower right corner of a letter-size mailpiece. The bottom and right sides of the mailpiece form the bottom and right edges of this rectangle. The left side of the rectangle is at least 4 3/4 inches in from the right edge of the mailpiece and the top of the rectangle is 5/8 inch up from the bottom of the piece.

If the barcode is printed in the barcode clear zone, the first (leftmost) bar must be positioned between 3 1/2 inches to 4 1/4 inches from the right edge of the mailpiece. The baseline of the barcode (the bottom of each bar) must be at least 1/4 inch as measured up from the bottom of the mailpiece, with a tolerance of plus or minus 1/16 inch. The barcode and all the bars that comprise it must be within 3/16 inch and 7/16 inch as measured from the bottom edge of the mailpiece.

This area, as defined by these parameters, wholly inside the barcode clear zone, in which the barcode must appear, is called the barcode read area.

Only delivery point barcodes may appear in the lower right corner of letter-size pieces submitted for automation discounted rates. POSTNET barcodes consisting of only ZIP+4 or 5-digit ZIP Code information are prohibited from appearing in the barcode clear zone on letter-size mailpieces submitted for automation discounts.

## LOWER RIGHT CORNER BARCODE



The barcode clear zone must be kept clear of any extraneous printing that might confuse the barcode readers. The Postal Service will disqualify a mailpiece prebarcoded in the lower right if any print or bleed-through appearing in the barcode clear zone has a print contrast ratio (PCR) of more than 15 percent (see previous module).

You can determine correct lower right barcode placement and clear zone location using the clear plastic overlays; ITEM 07 and NOTICE 67, both part of the course's optional resource kit.



## Item 07, Automation Gauge



## Not. 67, Automation Template

### Lower Right Corner Barcode Window

For particular applications, mailers will sometimes elect to print the barcode on an insert that will show through a window in the lower right corner of the mailpiece. The barcode window must be covered and conform to the following specifications:

- Left: at least 4 3/4 inch from the right edge.
- Right: at least 1/4 inch from the right edge.
- Top: at least 5/8 inch from the bottom.

The bottom edge of the barcode window must wrap around and form the bottom edge of the mailpiece. The window material must be clear and allow the barcode to meet the reflectance requirements outlined in module five.

In addition, throughout the full motion of the insert, the entire barcode must remain in the barcode clear zone and maintain the following clearances:

- At least 1/8 inch between the barcode and the left and right edges of the window.
- At least 1/25 inch between the barcode and the top edge of the window.
- At least 3/16 inch between the barcode and the bottom edge of the mailpiece.



## EXERCISE 6 - 2

Directions: Take out Item 07. It is the small clear plastic overlay included with the resource kit. Hold the template at arm's length against a neutral background.

You will see a number of positioning marks and inscribed gauges. For now, look for the lower right alignment mark on the template. You should see a corner marking in the lower right, with the text: "ALIGN WITH RIGHT BOTTOM CORNER OF MAILPIECE."

Align this corner marking with the lower right corner of the samples below. Using the areas in the lower right of the overlay marked "BARCODE FULLY WITHIN THIS AREA," and "FIRST BAR MUST BE WITHIN SHADED AREA," determine the answers for each sample question. Circle the letter of the correct answer.

1. Is the barcode correctly positioned?  
a) yes                      b) no



2. Is the barcode correctly positioned?  
a) yes                      b) no



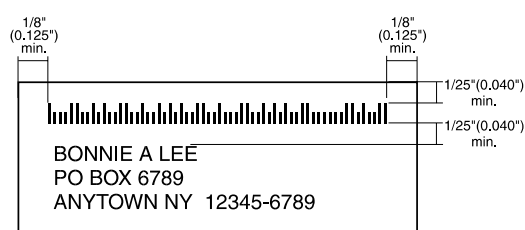
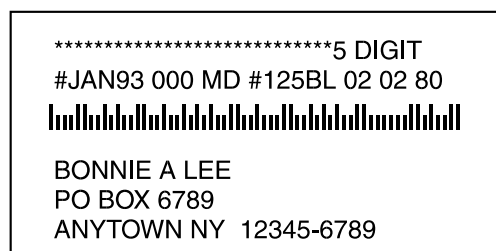
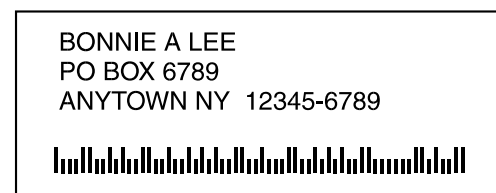
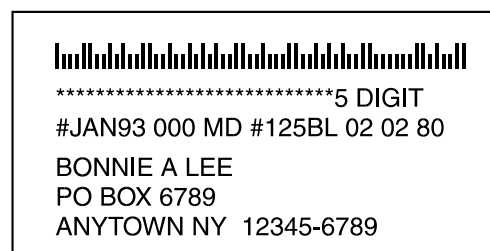
Recheck your answers using the ruler inscribed on the top edge of the template:  
Is the barcode baseline at least 1/4 inch from the bottom edge? Is the first (leftmost) bar between 3 1/2 inches to 4 1/4 inches from the right edge?

### ANSWERS TO EXERCISE 6 - 2

1. **yes**; both the first bar and the baseline of the barcode are correctly positioned.
2. **no**; the first (leftmost) bar is more than 4 1/4 inches from the right edge.

**ADDRESS BLOCK BARCODING**

With this method, the barcode is not subject to the strict positioning requirements of the barcode clear zone. This feature, combined with the ease and efficiency of printing the barcode while printing the address, has made this option very popular. If you decide to print the POSTNET barcode as part of the address block, you must locate the barcode in one of the following positions in the address:

**ABOVE ADDRESS****BELOW OPTIONAL ENDORSEMENT  
LINE AND/OR KEYLINE INFORMATION****BELOW ADDRESS****ABOVE OPTIONAL ENDORSEMENT****LINE AND/OR KEYLINE INFORMATION**

The barcode must never appear between the name of the recipient and the city, state, and ZIP Code information line.

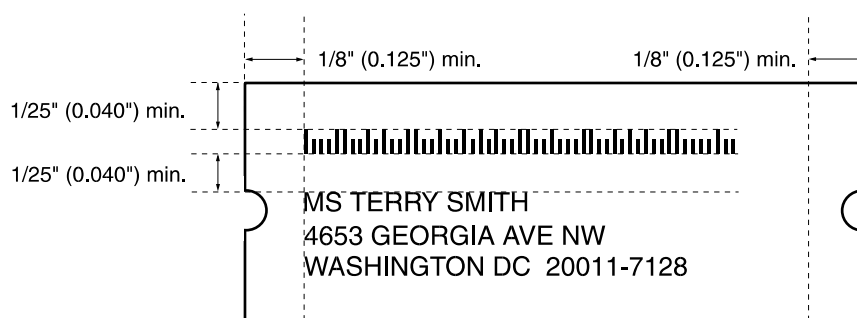
**Print Clearances**

Due to the lack of a defined clear zone, an address block barcode requires certain clearances relative to other text or markings. This allows the barcode readers to successfully locate it on the face of the mailpiece. Therefore, to ensure readability, you must maintain the following clearances:

- 1/25 inch above and below the barcode.
- 1/8 inch to the left and right of the barcode.

These tolerances apply equally to the address printing and any other printing on the mailpiece, as well as to the edges of the address label or window. The USPS includes label edges in this prohibition because label and window edges too close to the barcode may form shadows that can mimic additional bars. This can make it impossible to correctly interpret the ZIP+4 and delivery point information encoded in the barcode.

## ADDRESS BLOCK BARCODE CLEARANCES



### Placement

When you print a barcode in the address block, the capabilities of the Postal Service's wide area barcode readers (WABCRs) allow greater latitude in placement. The positioning requirements are as follows:

- The rightmost (last) bar in the barcode must be at least 1/2 inch from the right edge of the mailpiece.
- The leftmost (first) bar must be less than 10 1/2 inches from the right edge of the mailpiece, but no closer than 1/2 inch to the left edge.
- The top of each bar in the barcode must be no higher than 4 inches from the bottom of the mailpiece.
- The bottom line of the address block, including the barcode, must be at least 5/8 inches from the bottom of the mailpiece.

You can visualize the address block barcode placement requirements, along with the barcode clear zone, as another imaginary rectangle on the face of the mailpiece. To qualify for automation discounts for letter-size mail, the address block barcode must be completely within this rectangle.

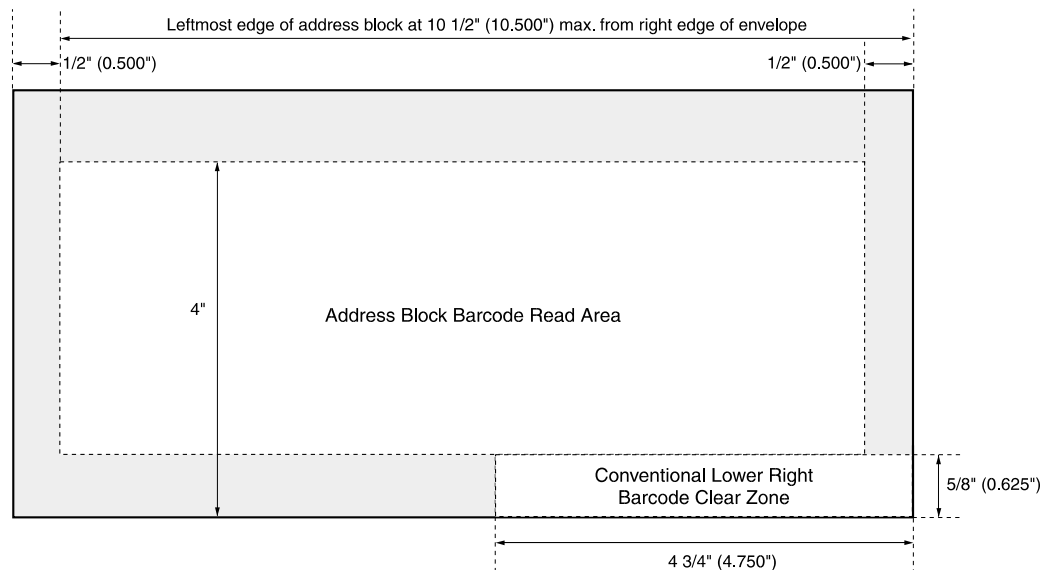
### Window Envelopes

Printing an address block barcode on inserts that show through an address window is also a very popular option. This allows the mailer to gain additional efficiencies by eliminating the need to apply address labels. It also makes the enclosed information more personal.

You must locate the address window so that the barcode, as visible through the window, will meet the positioning requirements for address block barcoding. The Postal Service prefers window coverings, but does not require them except for the previously described heavy letter mail.

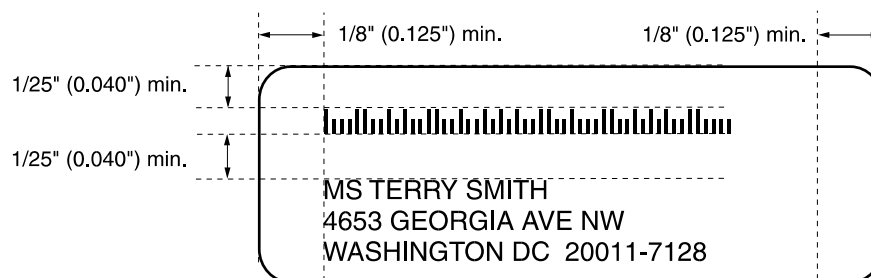
Window coverings, if used, must be sufficiently transparent to allow the barcode and its background to meet the reflectance requirements for POSTNET barcodes covered in module five, USPS Barcodes. The Postal Service makes this determination by measuring the barcode through the window material using a USPS envelope reflectance meter.

## BARCODE PLACEMENT AREAS




The 1/8 inch and 1/25 inch clearance requirements to label edges, for address block barcodes, also apply to address window edges or die cuts. These requirements are summarized in the following graphic:

## BARCODE / WINDOW CLEARANCE



You must maintain these clearances throughout the full range of insert motion. If you use the same envelope for multiple inserts, be sure these requirements are met for every combination.

Mailings prepared in window envelopes and claimed at automation rates must pass a tap test during acceptance. Envelopes are tapped to the left, right, and bottom. The pieces must meet the required clearances after being tapped in each of these three directions.

 **USPS**  
acceptance  
personnel will  
conduct what's  
called the "tap test"  
to check insert  
motion. The piece is  
tapped on the left,  
right and bottom.



## ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

The background reflectance minimums and *print reflectance difference* (PRD) contrast requirements for POSTNET barcodes described in module five; *USPS Barcodes*, must be met by both the barcode and the surface on which it is printed. This ensures that the barcode can be successfully read and interpreted on postal sorting equipment.

### Dark Fibers and Background Patterns

Dark fibers, background patterns, and bleed through that may interfere with the interpretation of the barcode must not appear in the barcode clear zone when barcoding in the lower right corner. This prohibition also applies to the area of the address block (including the required “clearances” described previously) where the barcode appears when using an address block barcode.

The Postal Service uses the envelope reflectance meter (previously described in module five) to determine if a mailpiece meets these additional reflectance requirements. Any extraneous printing in the prohibited areas that generates a *print contrast ratio* greater than 15% in either the red and green spectrums, as measured by a USPS or USPS-licensed envelope reflectance meter (ERM), violates these requirements.

## Address Labels and Stickers

Apply address labels and stickers on the outside of letter mail using methods and materials that prevent the labels from being damaged or removed during high-speed processing. Pressure-sensitive peel-off labels and stickers intended to be permanent on letter mail must have a minimum peel adhesion value of 8 ounces per inch. This value is the force required to remove, at a 90 degree angle, the label or sticker from a stainless steel surface. Placement of labels on letter-size envelopes is very important. Position labels so that there isn’t more than a 5 degree slant or tilt in relation to the bottom of the envelope. The barcode sorters cannot read barcodes skewed more than 5 degrees.

## MARKINGS

In addition to the basic required class markings and “PRESORTED” or “PRSRT,” qualifying barcoded mailpieces must also be marked “AUTO” (or AUTOCR, if applicable). This marking must appear either immediately adjacent to the postage area, or as part of the address block as per DMM M012.2.

Letter-size mailpieces barcoded in the address block do not require the “AUTO” rate marking. For pieces barcoded in the lower right, the “AUTO” marking may be printed to the left of the barcode.

You may omit the “PRESORTED” marking on barcoded First-Class Mail if the piece is marked “AUTO.” Pieces not claimed at automation rates must not bear this marking, unless single-piece rate postage or the corrective “Single-Piece” or “SNGLP” rate marking is applied.

**EXERCISE 6 - 3**

Directions: Circle the best response or fill in the blank to answer the following questions. Check your answers when you have completed the exercise.

1. The barcode clear zone extends  $\frac{5}{8}$  inch up from the bottom edge of a letter-size mailpiece and:
  - a)  $4\frac{1}{4}$  inches in from the right edge
  - b)  $4\frac{1}{4}$  inches in from the left edge
  - c)  $4\frac{3}{4}$  inches in from the left edge
  - d)  $4\frac{3}{4}$  inches in from the right edge
2. If located in the barcode read area of the barcode clear zone on a letter-size mailpiece, the leftmost (first) bar of the barcode must be positioned no further than:
  - a)  $4\frac{1}{4}$  inches in from the right edge
  - b)  $4\frac{1}{4}$  inches in from the left edge
  - c)  $4\frac{3}{4}$  inches in from the left edge
  - d)  $4\frac{3}{4}$  inches in from the right edge
3. When printing a barcode in the barcode read area of the barcode clear zone on a letter-size mailpiece, the barcode clear zone must not contain any printing with a PCR of greater than 15 percent.
  - a) true
  - b) false
4. Which of the following is not an acceptable position for a barcode printed as part of the address block:
  - a) above the address
  - b) below the optional endorsement line and above the recipient's name
  - c) between the delivery address line and the city and state information
  - d) above the optional endorsement line and/or keyline information
5. When printed as part of the address block on a letter-size mailpiece, a POSTNET barcode must be located no higher than \_\_\_\_\_ inches up from the bottom edge of the mailpiece.
6. An address block barcode requires a clearance above and below the barcode to any printing, window, or label edge of at least:
  - a)  $\frac{1}{15}$  inch
  - b)  $\frac{1}{25}$  inch
  - c)  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch
  - d)  $\frac{1}{8}$  inch

## ANSWERS TO EXERCISE 6 - 3

1. **d, 4 3/4 inches in from the right edge;** these measurements define the barcode clear zone in the lower right corner of a letter-size mailpiece.
2. **a, 4 1/4 inches in from the right edge;** when printing a barcode in the barcode clear zone, the first bar must be located between 3 1/2 inches to 4 1/4 inches in from the right edge of a letter-size mailpiece.
3. **a, true;** extraneous printing in the barcode clear zone with a PCR (print contrast ratio) of greater than 15 percent (as measured by a USPS envelope reflectance meter) can confuse USPS barcode sorters and prevent them from successfully interpreting the ZIP+4 Code and delivery point information encoded in the barcode.
4. **c, between the delivery address line and the city and state information;** placing an address block barcode anywhere between the recipient's name and the city, state, and ZIP Code information would unacceptably separate and break up address information critical to the proper and efficient delivery of the mailpiece.
5. **4;** the wide area barcode readers (WABCRs) installed on USPS barcode sorters will scan for POSTNET barcodes on the face of a letter-size mailpiece no higher than 4 inches up from the bottom.
6. **b, 1/25;** a properly positioned address block barcode maintains a clearance of 1/25 inch above and below, and 1/8 inch to the left and right, between the barcode and any other printing, markings, and window die cuts or label edges. These clearances must be maintained throughout the full range of motion of an insert showing through a window in a window envelope.

The Postal Service offers an automation discount for flat-size barcoded mailpieces. Our current flat sorting machines (FSMs) are designed with wide area barcode readers (WABCR) that can locate and scan a barcode almost anywhere on the address side of a flat-size mailpiece. In this section, we cover the standards for prebarcoding flats.

Qualifying flat-size mailpieces must meet the size and construction requirements for processing on USPS automated flat sorters. While automated letters are limited to the definition of the basic processing category, flat-size standards actually expand upon the flat-size category discussed in module three. The structure and dimensional tolerances of the POSTNET barcode used for flat-size mail is the same as previously discussed for letter-size mail.



## WHAT YOU WILL LEARN ABOUT AUTOMATION REQUIREMENTS FOR FLAT-SIZE MAILPIECES

Upon completion of this portion of the module, you should be able to do the following:

- Differentiate between **FSM 1000** and **FSM 881** qualified pieces.
- Describe the differences in the determination of length and height for automated flats.
- Describe the construction requirements for flat-size mailpieces submitted for automation discounts.
- Describe the placement, positioning, and applicable clearances of POSTNET barcodes on flat-size mail.

## AUTOMATION RATES FOR FLAT-SIZE MAIL

USPS automation discounts apply to flat-size mailpieces that are prebarcoded by the mailer. Automation rate discounts for flat-size mail allow for either a ZIP+4 or a delivery point barcode. In addition, the mailpiece itself must meet the physical requirements for automated flat sortation. This applies equally to all flat-size mailpieces, regardless of class.

The POSTNET barcode print quality, tolerances, clearance, reflectance, and accuracy requirements discussed in module five, *USPS Barcodes*, apply equally to flat-size mailpieces. Mailpieces that do not meet these requirements are not eligible for the automation discount.

The following classes of mail include discounted rate options for barcoded mailings of flat-size mailpieces:

- First-Class Mail.
- Periodicals Mail.
- Standard Mail (A).

## Categories of Automated Flats

The Postal Service currently employs two types of flat sorting machines (FSM) with barcode reader capability; the FSM 1000 and the FSM 881. Automated flat-size mailpieces are classified as either FSM 1000 or FSM 881 compatible.

With the greater number of machines deployed, the FSM 881 remains the workhorse of the Postal Service's flat-size processing environment. The newer FSM 1000, however, has the ability to sort mailpieces that previously had not been acceptable on the FSM 881.

If your flat-size mailpiece meets the standards for processing on the FSM 881 including turning ability and deflection, you must follow the requirements for FSM 881 preparation. If your piece does not qualify as an FSM 881 piece, it may be prepared according to the standards for processing on the FSM 1000 as long as the mailpiece meets all eligibility criteria.

## FSM 881 REQUIREMENTS

If a mailpiece meets the following criteria, it must be prepared for the FSM 881. If it violates any one of these criteria, other than the polywrap specifications, it may still be eligible for prebarcoded flat-size discounts under the FSM 1000 criteria.

### FSM 881 Dimensions

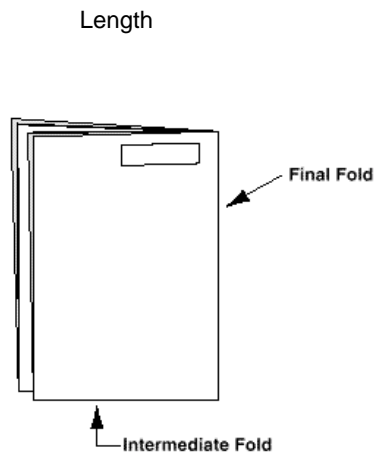
The definitions of height, length, and address side for automated flat-sized mailpieces are dictated by the need for the mail to be stable while traveling through the flat sorting machine. Mail is fed into the FSM 881 with the bound edge presented as the leading edge of the mailpiece. The bound edge rides on the machine's guide track to prevent flutter and jamming.

Address orientation has no effect on determining length and height for automated flats. For pieces prepared as a single sheet, enveloped, or in a full-length wrapper or sleeve, the length is simply the longest dimension. The height is perpendicular to the length.

The length and height of FSM 881 flat-size pieces that are bound or folded, and not mailed in an envelope, are determined by the bound or folded edge (or final fold). For FSM 881 pieces, the folded edge (or final fold) is always the height (vertical dimension).

For example, a magazine's bound edge determines its height; a newspaper's last folded edge is its height.

## LENGTH VS HEIGHT

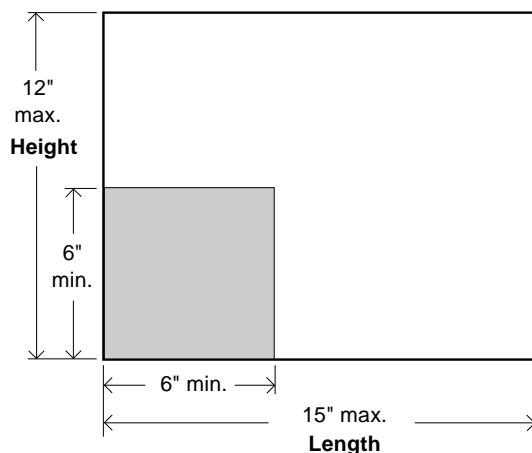


The minimum and maximum dimensions for FSM 881 processing are:

	<u>Minimum</u>	<u>Maximum</u>
<b>Height</b>	6 inches	12 inches
<b>Length</b>	5 inches*	15 inches
<b>Thickness</b>	0.009 inch	3/4 inch

\*If between 6 to 7 1/2 inches high. If the piece is more than 7 1/2 inches high, but no more than 9 1/2 inches high, the piece must be at least 5 3/8 inches long. This applies only to pieces meeting these parameters, otherwise the minimum length is 6 inches.

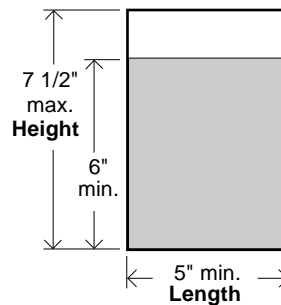
## FSM 881 DIMENSIONS



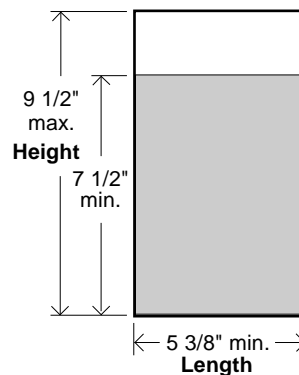
## Minimum Length Exceptions

While the minimum length for FSM 881 qualified flats is *normally* 6 inches, certain *digest-size* pieces may be as little as 5 inches long. If the height of such a piece *exceeds* 9 1/2 inches, the minimum length of 6 inches will again apply.

## DIGEST SIZE PIECES



OR



## Aspect Ratio

Unlike letter-size mail, there is no aspect ratio requirement for automation-compatible flat-size mailpieces, though FSM 881 qualified mailpieces must be rectangular in shape (see module three, Processing Categories). However, flat-size First-Class mailpieces weighing one ounce or less may still be subject to the First-Class Mail nonstandard surcharge.

## Maximum Weight

The maximum weight for an FSM 881 qualified piece is, by class:

- First-Class Mail: 13 ounces.
- Periodicals: 16 ounces.
- Standard Mail: *less than 16 ounces.*

## Polywrap

FSM 881 qualified pieces must use an approved polywrap material meeting all the requirements for FSM 881 processing. The polywrap material must meet all *seven* of the physical properties listed in DMM C820, exhibit 4.1a.



### DMM C820.4.1a

The plastic manufacturer must provide the polywrap user (the mailer) with an official American Standard Testing Methods (ASTM) certification that the polywrap material meets the required criteria.

## Certification

Prior to the initial mailing, the mailer must provide a copy of the ASTM certificate to the local mailpiece design analyst (MDA). The MDA will review the certification and approve the polywrap product for FSM 881 qualified mailings.

## Markings

Mailers must mark FSM 881 authorized polywrapped flats: “USPS FSM 881 Approved Polywrap” or “USPS 881 Approved Poly.”

This marking must appear in a visible location on the outside of the mailpiece. It may be printed directly on the polywrap material, but must not interfere with the delivery address or barcode recognition.

## Sealing

For FSM 881 pieces only, the final seam must be located on the address side of the mailpiece and oriented from top to bottom. The seam must not cover any part of the address and barcode read areas.

## Overhang

For FSM 881 mailpieces, a total overhang of no more than 1 1/2 inches is allowed at the top of the mailpiece, when the contents are shifted completely to the bottom.

Overhang on each side cannot be more than 1/4 inch. The piece cannot be wrapped so tightly as to cause the mailpiece to bend.

### Flexibility

The flexibility of flat-size mail for automation discounts is an important issue. In general, automated flats must be able to bend as they are being processed. An FSM 881 qualified flat-size mailpiece must have sufficient flexibility to bend on the circular transport drum located at the end of each FSM 881.

The two concentric arcs on the top of the flat mail machinability tester mimic exactly the clearance of the end turn on the actual FSM 881. When holding the flat-size mailpiece vertically (up) with the bound, folded, or final folded edge (for example, a newspaper) positioned to the right edge, the piece should be flexible enough to fit between those two curves without permanently altering its shape. Some materials, such as stiff cardboard, cannot pass this test.

A small rigid piece, such as a video box, is acceptable if its longest edge can be placed between the two arcs without touching the lines.

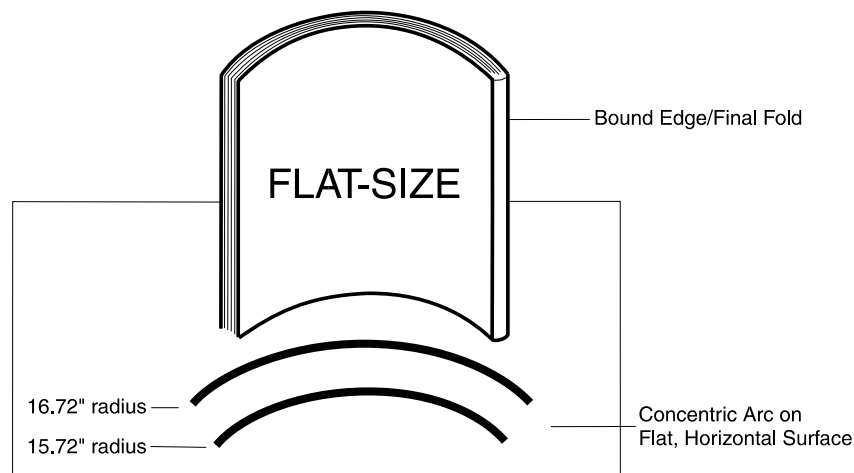
### Rigidity

An FSM 881 qualified flat must also be rigid enough to prevent it from folding over upon itself while standing upright during processing on the FSM 881.

A qualifying FSM 881 flat-size mailpiece must show sufficient rigidity when placed on the flat surface of the machinability tester. The piece must not bend past a set measurement. This test is similar to hanging the flat piece off the edge of a table.

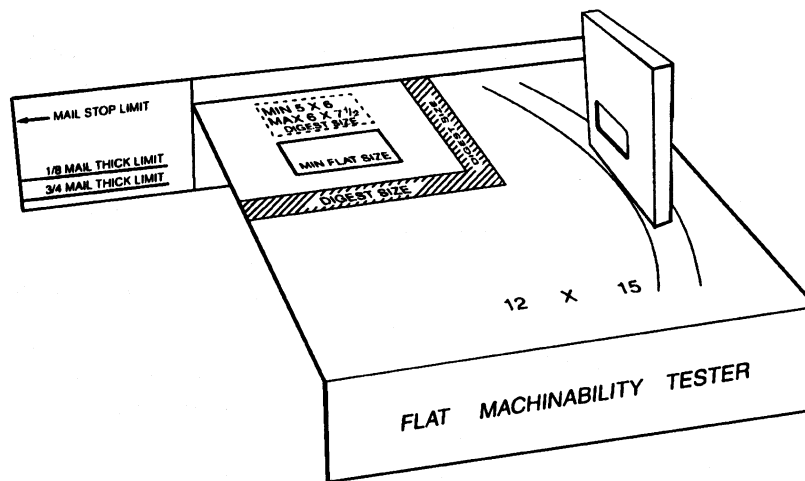
When a flat is placed on the tester and is extended 5 inches off the supporting surface, no part of the edge of the mailpiece that is opposite the bound, folded, or final folded edge must deflect (bend) more than 2 3/8 inches (if the mailpiece is between 1/8 inch and 3/4 inch thick), or more than 1 3/4 inches (if the piece is 1/8 inch thick or less).

### FSM 881 FLEXIBILITY REQUIREMENT

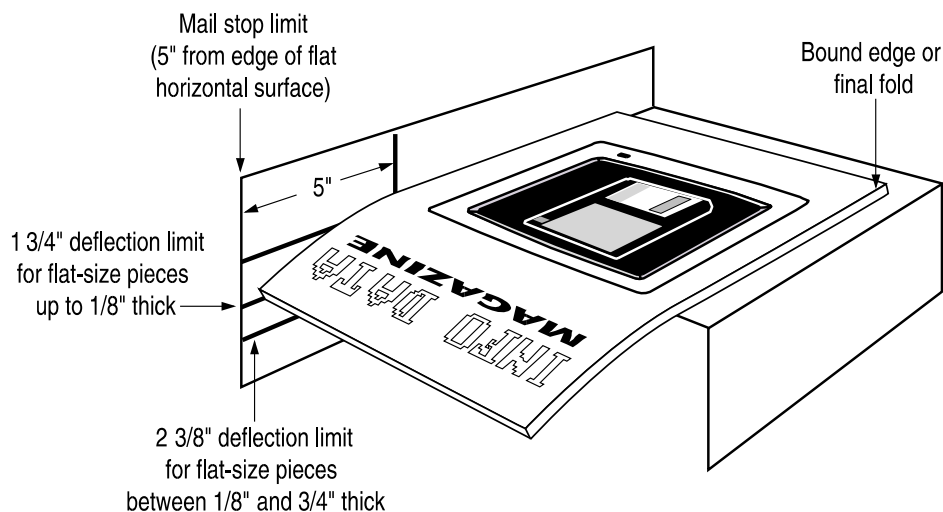




## "RIGID" FLAT REQUIREMENT



## FSM RIGIDITY REQUIREMENT



The preceding illustrations show the use of the flat mail machinability tester. Mailers may contact their local mailpiece design analyst to have flat mail tested for flexibility. Mailers who wish to conduct their own flexibility testing may purchase a flat mail machinability tester through the Postal Service.

To purchase a flat mail machinability tester, write to:

**TOPEKA MATERIAL  
DISTRIBUTION CENTER  
US POSTAL SERVICE  
500 SW MONTARA PKWY  
TOPEKA KS 66624-2602**

## FSM 1000 REQUIREMENTS

If a flat-size mailpiece is unable to meet any one of the requirements for FSM 881 compatibility (except for the FSM 881 polywrap certification) including:

- height,
- weight,
- thickness,
- turning ability, or
- deflection (rigidity) requirements, the piece may still qualify for automation rates under the following FSM 1000 criteria.

## FSM 1000 Dimensions

For pieces prepared as a single sheet, enveloped, or in a full-length wrapper or sleeve, the length is simply the longest dimension. The height is perpendicular to the length.

The length and height of FSM 1000 flat-size pieces that are bound or folded, and not mailed in an envelope, are determined by the bound or folded edge (or final fold). For FSM 1000 pieces, the folded edge (or final fold) is the length. This is the opposite of FSM 881 qualified pieces.

The minimum and maximum dimensions for FSM 1000 processing are:

	<u>Minimum</u>	<u>Maximum</u>
<b>Height</b>	4 inches	12 inches
<b>Length</b>	4 inches	15 3/4 inches

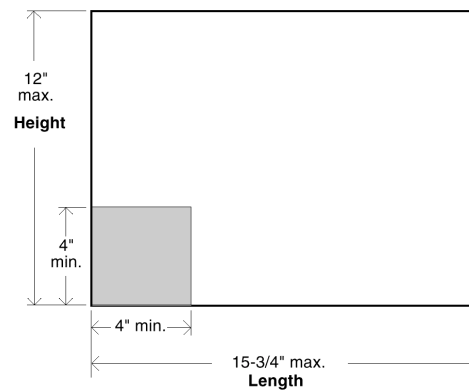
### Minimum Thickness:

- 0.009 inch, for pieces at least 5 inches long.
- 1/4 inch, for pieces at least 4 inches long, but less than 5 inches.

### Maximum Thickness:

- 1 1/4 inches, for pieces 13 inches long or less.
- 7/8 inch, for pieces longer than 13 inches.

## FSM 1000 DIMENSIONS



## Aspect Ratio

There is no aspect ratio requirement for automation-compatible flat-size mailpieces. However, flat-size First-Class mailpieces, weighing an ounce or less, are subject to the First-Class Mail nonstandard surcharge.

## Maximum Weight

The maximum weight for an FSM 881 qualified piece is, by class:

- First-Class Mail: 13 ounces.
- Periodicals: 6 pounds.
- Standard Mail: less than 16 ounces.

## Folding

Unbound flat-size mailpieces submitted for FSM 1000 processing are required to be double-folded, having both an intermediate and final fold.

### Polywrap

FSM 1000 qualified pieces may use a polywrap material that has been approved for only the “haze” requirements listed in DMM C820, Exhibit 4.1a., # 2.

The plastic manufacturer must provide the polywrap user (the mailer) with an official American Standard Testing Methods (ASTM) certification that the polywrap material meets the required criteria.

### Certification

Prior to the initial mailing, the mailer must provide a copy of the ASTM certificate to the local mailpiece design analyst (MDA). The MDA will review the certification and approve the polywrap product for FSM 1000 qualified mailings.

### Markings

Mailers must mark FSM 1000 authorized polywrapped flats: “USPS FSM 1000 Approved Polywrap” or “USPS 1000 Approved Poly.”

This marking must appear in a visible location on the outside of the mailpiece. It may be printed directly on the polywrap material, but must not interfere with the delivery address or barcode recognition.

### Sealing

The FSM 881 final seam requirements do not apply to FSM 1000 mailpieces.

### Overhang

For FSM 1000 mailpieces, overhang on any edge cannot be more than 3/4 inch, for a total of 1 1/2 inches.

### Flexibility and Rigidity

FSM 1000 pieces are not subject to the flexibility and rigidity requirements of the FSM 881. Pieces not meeting the turning ability and deflection standards for the FSM 881 may be prepared as FSM 1000 pieces.

The following regulations apply to all types of automated flat-size mailpieces:

### TABS

Tabbing open edges closed is not required to qualify for flat-size automation rates. If used, the sealing method must not interfere with the barcode or any required markings. Clasps, strings, buttons, and staples are prohibited.

### UNIFORMITY

The contents of a flat-size mailpiece must be relatively uniform in thickness. Each piece must have a smooth and regular shape, free of irregularities that may be incompatible with automated processing.

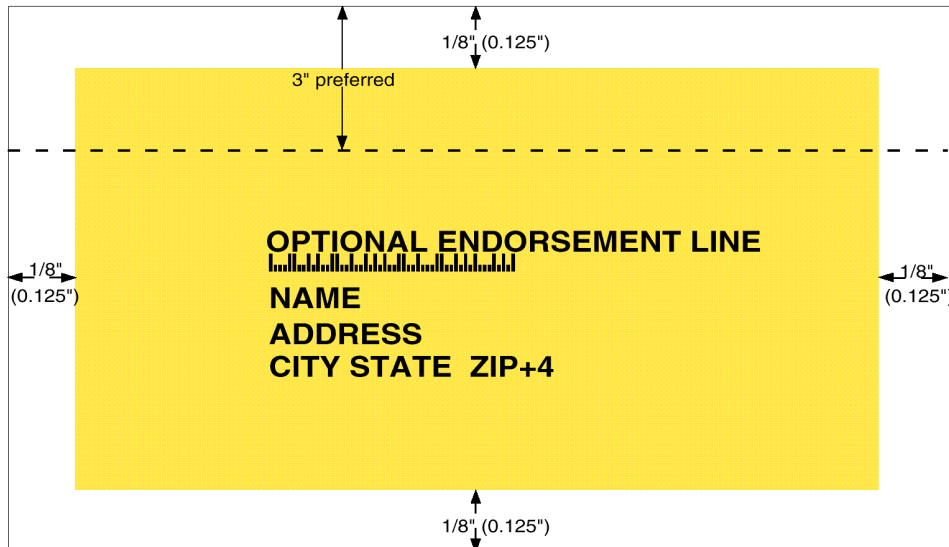
Small or irregularly shaped contents must be secured to prevent shifting. Pieces enclosed in sleeves or wrappers must stay in place during processing.

### BARCODE PLACEMENT

A barcode may be read virtually anywhere on the address side of a flat-size mailpiece, if no part of the barcode is closer than 1/8 inch to any edge of the flat.

Barcodes for flat-size mailpieces are subject to the same requirements for address block barcoding as listed in the previous section, except for placement.

## BARCODE PLACEMENT



We recommend that, when holding the flat with the bound or folded edge to the right, the address label be placed in the upper right corner of the mailpiece, perpendicular to the bound or folded edge. This placement makes it easier for letter carriers to quickly and accurately read the address.

## WINDOW ENVELOPES AND INSERTS

For barcode processing, window envelopes and inserts must be designed so that the entire address and POSTNET barcode appear in the window area, allowing for shifting of the insert. POSTNET barcodes preprinted on inserts must maintain a minimum clearance area of 1/8 inch from the left and right edges of the window opening (or other text or graphics) when the insert moves the full range within the envelope.

A minimum clearance of 1/25 inch must be maintained between the POSTNET barcode and the window edge, above or below, allowing for full movement of the insert. This 1/25 inch minimum clearance is also required between the top and bottom of the barcode and any other printing.

Either open or covered windows may be used for addresses and address block barcodes. The material used for covered windows should be clear or transparent (non-glare materials are best) and securely attached on all edges. Cellophane and polystyrene are examples of popular window covering materials.

All window coverings should be free of wrinkles, streaks, fogging, colors, and other conditions that may obscure the barcode during processing. All barcode information, as read through the window, should meet minimum reflectance guidelines. A minimum print reflectance difference (PRD) of 30 percent is needed to read POSTNET barcodes by the barcode reader located on a flat sorting machine. This requirement is generally met by using black or dark ink on a white or light pastel background.

### ADDRESS LABELS AND STICKERS

Apply address labels and stickers on the outside of letter mail using methods and materials that prevent the labels from being damaged or removed during high-speed processing. Permanent labels and stickers must have a minimum peel adhesion value of 8 ounces per inch. This value is the force required to remove, at a 90-degree angle, the label or sticker from a stainless steel surface.

The minimum clearance requirements for the POSTNET barcode, when applied to address labels, are the same as those for window envelopes, that is, 1/8 inch between the barcode and the left and right edges of the label, and 1/25 inch between the top and bottom of the barcode and label edges or other printing.

### FLATS PREPARATION

FSM 881 and FSM 1000 qualified pieces may be combined in the same mailing, but must be bundled separately. The differently qualified pieces must be in pure bundles of FSM 881 or FSM 1000 pieces only, but the bundles themselves can be combined in the same sack or tray.

Ideally, flats should be prepared so as to maintain machinable integrity. When placed in sacks for transport, edges and corners on the best designed mailpieces might be bent, causing them to become nonmachinable.

Bundles of flats that are shrinkwrapped will remain flat during handling and when opened for processing on FSMs. Flat mailings prepared on pallets will also maintain straight edges all the way through the mail system, preserving their machinability.

Detailed preparation standards for Flats are in the Quick Service Guides 141, 241, 641, 700, and 720.

### MARKINGS

In addition to the basic required class markings and “PRESORTED” or “PRSRT,” qualifying prebarcoded mailpieces must also be marked “AUTO” (or AUTOCR, if applicable). This marking must appear either immediately adjacent to the postage area, or as part of the address block as per DMM M012.2.

Generally, pieces not submitted at automation rates must not bear this marking unless additional postage or a corrective marking is applied.

First-Class Mail and Standard Mail flats do not require an “Auto” marking. First-Class Mail Flats not marked “Auto” must bear both the “Presorted” or “PRSRT” and “First-Class” markings. Standard Mail flats not marked “Auto” must be marked “Presorted Standard,” “PRSRT STD” or “Nonprofit Organization,” as appropriate.

**EXERCISE 6 - 4**

Directions: Circle the best response or fill in the blank to answer the following questions. Check your answers when you have completed the exercise.

1. Flat-size mailpieces qualifying for prebarcoded discounts are classified as meeting the requirements for either FSM 881, FSM 1000, or FSM 2000 processing.
  - a) true
  - b) false
2. For a flat-size, automation rate mailpiece determined to be FSM 881 qualified, the dimension parallel to the bound or folded edge is the:
  - a) length
  - b) height
  - c) thickness
3. There is no aspect ratio requirement for prebarcoded flats.
  - a) true
  - b) false
4. The material used to polywrap a prebarcoded flat-size mailpiece must be approved prior to mailing by the mailpiece design analyst (MDA).
  - a) true
  - b) false
5. The minimum length and height for an FSM 1000 qualified flat-size mailpiece is:
  - a) 4 inches
  - b) 5 inches
  - c) 6 inches
6. A qualifying POSTNET barcode must be placed at least \_\_\_\_\_ inch from the edge of any flat-size mailpiece.
7. FSM 881 and FSM 1000 mailpieces may be packaged together in the same mailing.
  - a) true
  - b) false

### ANSWERS TO EXERCISE 6 - 4

1. **b, false;** flat-size mailpieces are classified as FSM 881 or FSM 1000 qualified only.
2. **b, height;** due to the transport method on the FSM 881, the height is determined by the final fold or binding. The length is the dimension perpendicular to the bound or folded edge.
3. **a, true;** only letter-size pieces submitted at automation rates must meet the aspect ratio requirement. However, even though they may qualify for prebarcoded discounts, First-Class Mail flat-size pieces are subject to the nonstandard surcharge if under 1 ounce.
4. **a, true;** the MDA must certify that the polywrap material meets the specifications for either FSM 881 or FSM 1000 processing, as applicable.
5. **a, 4 inches;** an FSM 1000 qualified mailpiece may be as little as 4 inches by 4 inches; however, for pieces less than 5 inches long, the minimum thickness becomes 1/4 inch.
6. **1/8;** a minimum clearance of 1/8 inch to the edge of a flat-size mailpiece is required to allow the WABCR to successfully locate and decode the barcode.
7. **b, false;** FSM 881 and FSM 1000 qualified pieces may be presented together as part of a single mailing, but they must be packaged separately from one another.

Effective January 10, 1999, the USPS began offering discounts for Package Services machinable parcels bearing a qualifying parcel barcode (covered in module five, *USPS Barcodes*). Any Package Services machinable parcels routinely processed at a bulk mail center (BMC) or auxiliary service facility (ASF) with parcel sorters qualify for this discount.

However, eligibility for this discount is dependent on the proper application of a correct, readable, 5-digit parcel barcode. The required barcode format was covered in module five, *USPS Barcodes*. The definition of the requirements for machinable parcels is in module three, *Processing Categories*.

The final portion of this module deals with the application and positioning of the 5-digit barcode on a qualifying machinable mailpiece.



## WHAT YOU WILL LEARN ABOUT AUTOMATION REQUIREMENTS FOR PARCELS

Upon completion of this portion of the module, you should be able to do the following:

- Describe the proper placement and location of parcel barcodes.
- Describe the clearance requirements for parcel barcodes.
- List the requirements for use of address windows.



### BARCODED DISCOUNTS FOR MACHINABLE PARCELS

Barcoded parcel discounts apply to mailings of 50 or more pieces for the following sub-classes:

- Parcel Post.
- Bound Printed Matter.
- Library Mail.
- Media Mail.

Some subclasses allow the discount in addition to the presorted rates, others do not.

For a full description of these requirements, consult the individual subclass entries under DMM E711, E712, E713, or E714 or contact your local postmaster or business mail entry personnel.

### DIMENSIONS

Only Package Services mailpieces adhering to the standards for machinable parcels (covered in module three, *Processing Categories*) are eligible to receive this discount. The Postal Service's automated parcel sorters can only process pieces that meet this criteria.

### CONSTRUCTION

Barcoded parcels must also meet the general standards for mailability outlined in module one, *Classes of Mail*, and as required by DMM C010.

### BARCODE PLACEMENT

Both the delivery address and the parcel barcode must be placed on the largest surface of the parcel. The barcode must be placed on the top surface of the parcel if its shape requires a particular orientation for stability during processing. The barcode should be placed immediately adjacent to the address. At a minimum, the barcode must be at least 1 inch from the edge of the mailpiece.

Only one properly formatted postal routing barcode may appear on the mailpiece.

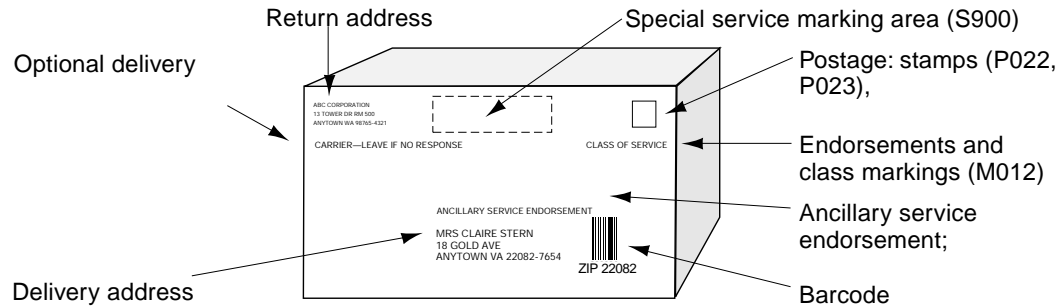
### PRINT CLEARANCES

A clear zone of 1/8 inch, in which no printing may appear, is required both above and below the barcode. Additionally, a clear space equal to 10 times the average width of the narrow element (either bars or spaces) must be maintained to the left and right of the barcode.

### WINDOWS

Subject to the positioning requirements, the barcode may appear on an attachment or an enclosure in a window envelope, assuming the reflectance standards described in module five, *USPS Barcodes*, continue to be met when imaged through the window material. Avoid glassine covering address and barcode.

## PHYSICAL STANDARDS FOR AUTOMATED PARCELS



### Markings

Mark Package Services pieces on the face with the appropriate marking as shown in the following chart.

Subclass	Marking
Media Mail	Media Mail
Parcel Post	Parcel Post or the abbreviation "PP"
Parcel Select	Parcel Select or the abbreviation "PS"
Bound Printed Matter	Bound Printed Matter or the abbreviation "BPM"
Library Mail	Library Mail

Other than the basic rate and class markings no additional markings are required for barcoded Parcel Post mailpieces.

## AUTOMATION MAILINGS SUMMARY

The Postal Service offers postage discounts for mailer-applied barcodes on flat-size mailpieces, letter-size mailpieces and machinable parcels.

A qualifying automation mailing for each of these processing categories involves the successful combination of proper barcodes, automation-compatible piece design, preparation, and other relevant standards.

A successful automated mailing is the culmination of a quality control and decision-making process. Much like the sequence of modules in this course, each step or stage in this process builds upon those that came before.

You or your client will be unable to submit a qualifying, barcoded, letter-size Standard Mail advertising mailing unless the piece has been properly classified, designed as an automation-compatible letter, and labeled or printed with a properly printed and located barcode.

Proper quality control at all stages of the process ensures that the mailing is completed on time, at the postage rate originally quoted, and at the preparation and production cost as estimated from the outset.

Postal personnel of all levels of expertise are available to validate your direction at each stage of the process. But you, as the mailpiece quality control (MQC) specialist, remain the key component for your company.

The table below lists processing categories by class and the pertinent QSG reference for each automation preparation option.

## QUICK SERVICE GUIDE REFERENCES

	First-Class	Periodicals	Standard	Package Services
Letters	QSG 140	QSG 240	QSG 640	N/A
Cards	QSG 140	N/A	N/A	N/A
Flats	QSG 141	QSG 241	QSG 641	QSG 720
Machinable Parcels	N/A	N/A	QSG 700	QSG 700

**EXERCISE 6 - 5**

Directions: Circle the best response or fill in the blank to answer the following questions. Check your answers when you have completed the exercise.

1. Barcoded parcel discounts apply to mailings of \_\_\_\_\_ or more pieces for each subclass of Package Services parcels.
2. Barcoded parcel discounts are available for all Package Services subclasses.
  - a) true
  - b) false
3. Package Services barcoded parcel discounts are available only for:
  - a) machinable parcels
  - b) outside parcels
  - c) irregular parcels
  - d) all of the above
4. In general, the delivery address and parcel barcode must be placed on the face of the parcel with the:
  - a) smallest surface area
  - b) average surface area of all sides
  - c) largest surface area
  - d) the most stable surface
5. A qualifying parcel barcode must maintain a clearance to the edge of the host mailpiece of at least:
  - a) 1/8 inch
  - b) 1/4 inch
  - c) 1/2 inch
  - d) 1 inch
6. Printing may appear either above or below a parcel barcode, but no closer than:
  - a) 1/8 inch
  - b) 1/4 inch
  - c) 1/2 inch
  - d) 1 inch
7. More than one postal routing barcode may appear on a prebarcoded parcel qualifying for USPS barcode discounts.
  - a) true
  - b) false

### ANSWERS TO EXERCISE 6 - 5

1. **50**; you must have at least 50 pieces for each Package Services subclass to make a barcoded parcel mailing.
2. **a, true**; at least one barcoded parcel option is available for Parcel Post, Media Mail, Library Mail, and Bound Printed Matter.
3. **a, machinable parcels**; only parcels that are machinable on USPS parcel sorters fitted with parcel barcode readers are eligible for the barcode discount.
4. **c, largest surface area**; the address and barcode must be placed on the face of the parcel with the largest surface area.
5. **d, 1 inch**; parcel barcodes must be placed no closer than 1 inch to the edge of the parcel.
6. **a, 1/8**; this clearance is required to ensure that the barcode readers can successfully locate and decode the barcode.
7. **b, false**; to prevent possible confusion, only one postal routing barcode is allowed on a mailpiece qualifying for USPS parcel barcode discounts.

Sometimes, it is simply not possible to design a mailpiece that qualifies for postal automation discounts. For a variety of reasons, you may be unable to meet the specifications outlined in the previous modules. Your client's needs or desires for a unique message or medium may override the potential benefits and savings of automation-compatible mailpieces. The Postal Service does not *require* that all mailings be automation-compatible, only that they be properly prepared to qualify for the class and rate for which they are submitted.

The USPS continues to offer a range of options for nonautomation-compatible mailpieces of all classes, albeit at somewhat higher postage rates. While it is beyond the scope of this course to cover preparation requirements in depth, we will direct you to where more information is available, based on the class and size of your mailpiece.

We will also cover how to design your mailpieces to be compatible with the Postal Service's optical character readers, which can add barcodes to pieces not originally bearing them. If you do not prebarcode your mailpieces, it is likely that the Postal Service will attempt to do so itself.



## WHAT YOU WILL LEARN ABOUT REQUIREMENTS FOR NONAUTOMATION MAILPIECES

Upon completion of this module, you should be able to do the following:

- Describe, in general, the preparation options available to mailers who are unable to barcode their mailpieces.
- Identify ideal type styles for OCR readability.
- Describe the print characteristics and print quality necessary for OCR readability.
- Demonstrate the use of USPS positioning templates for proper placement of delivery address and nonaddress information on letter-size mailpieces.
- Identify characteristics to ensure production of FSM-friendly flats.

## NONAUTOMATION RATES

USPS workshare discount programs also include nonautomation presort options. The Postal Service returns savings due to mailer presorting as postage discounts. The potential savings are less for nonautomation mailings because the Postal Service must use more expensive manual handling to process these pieces.

## Nonautomation Preparation

Presorting for nonautomation mailings requires mailers to group letter- or flat-sized mailpieces into packages. These packages are labeled by presort level and sorted into either sacks or trays. The trays and sacks are labeled to various postal facilities as required by the sortation rules.

These packages, sacks, or trays may be opened en route for more sortation, or travel directly to their destination office for delivery. The amount of discount you receive for each piece may depend upon its presort level (e.g., is it in a 3-digit package or a 5-digit package?).

Your design choices determine your mailpiece's processing category. The processing category, in turn, limits which preparation options are available. For example, letter and flat-size preparation and presorting requirements are different. Mailers may prefer one type of sortation over the other, based on their own unique needs and limitations.

Further information, in a condensed format, is available in Publication 95, *Quick Service Guide*. If you need clarification regarding these standards, be sure to contact your local post office or business mail entry personnel.



**Pub 95, Quick Service Guide**

## AUTOMATED PROCESSING WITHOUT A DISCOUNT

Letter-size mailpieces without a delivery point barcode can usually be read and barcoded by an optical character reader (OCR). The OCR locates the address printed on the face of an envelope and reads the firm name, if any, the delivery address, the city, state, and ZIP Code.

If the read is successful, the OCR prints a delivery point barcode on the mailpiece in the lower right corner, in an area known as the barcode clear zone. The OCR then either performs an initial sortation and/or sorts the mailpiece into a holdout for further processing on a barcode sorter (BCS).

Handwritten and other OCR unreadable mail is frequently image lifted using a special purpose video camera on an OCR. The image is then viewed by a remote barcode sorter clerk who sees a black and white image of the mailpiece on a computer screen and types the address information of the mailpiece using a conventional keyboard.

The ZIP+4 Code is automatically looked up in the national database and a delivery point barcode is printed by ink jet on to the mailpiece using a specially adapted BCS. It is the avoidance of this and other labor-intensive processes that allows the Postal Service to offer discounts for barcoded mail.

## AUTOMATED PROCESSING

The Postal Service's use of automated sorting equipment such as OCRs, barcode sorters (BCSs), and flat sorters has not only modified the way we process mail, it has changed some of the guidelines that define what a mailpiece should look like.

When mail is processed manually, each envelope or postcard need only contain a complete and accurate address to be correctly sorted. Additional requirements must be followed for information to be successfully scanned and interpreted by the OCR.

A mailpiece should meet specific size dimensions in order to enter and travel through an OCR. The address or barcode must be readable to the electronic eye of the equipment. Some inks, papers, type styles, and address formats improve readability, while others may impair it.

If you follow the specifications presented in this section, the Postal Service will be able to process your mail with a high degree of success on its automated equipment. The capability of an OCR to determine a valid address depends on the quality and accuracy of the address on the mailpiece.

Other elements on the mailpiece, such as a facing identification mark (FIM) and POSTNET barcode, may be added to meet the needs of automated processing. All these items also have printing specifications that should be followed to ensure readability.

With the development of equipment that can perform optical character recognition on flat-size mailpieces, these standards should also be taken into account when designing flat-size mail.



## LETTER-SIZE MAILPIECES

Letter-size mailpieces (including First-Class Mail postcards) not barcoded and therefore not part of an automation discounted mailing can still reap the benefits of postal automated sortation. In addition, First-Class Mail and Standard Mail letter-size mailings meeting the requirements for upgradable mailpieces can be prepared without the labor-intensive packaging required for the basic nonautomation preparation options.

## UPGRADABLE PREPARATION OPTION

This preparation option is called upgradable presort. It requires that your mailpieces be compatible with the Postal Service's optical character readers (OCRs). The OCR can then upgrade your mailpiece by applying a POSTNET barcode in the lower right corner in the barcode clear zone. This allows the Postal Service to merge these "upgraded" mailpieces into the more efficient barcoded mailstream, even though you did not barcode them.

While the USPS offers no additional discount for this preparation option, you reap the potential service benefits offered by automated processing. Also, because of the way the Postal Service processes automation-compatible mailpieces, you can enjoy the less labor intensive preparation requirements offered by the upgradable presort option.

Contrast the tray requirements for upgradable presort in Publication 95, *Quick Service Guide*, QSG 131 and 631 with the packaging requirements of the basic presort options in QSG 130 and 630.



**QSG 131, 631, 130, 630**

The Postal Service urges all mailers to design their mailpieces to meet as many of the requirements of this module as possible. This is true even if you do not present upgradable mailings. Mailpieces deposited at the single-piece (full) rates, and your office mail, can also benefit.

This allows the Postal Service to ensure that your mailpieces receive the kind of expeditious handling offered only by postal automated sorting equipment. Even your own personal correspondence can benefit from following these guidelines.

## LETTER-SIZE DIMENSIONS

Each letter-size piece presented under the upgradable preparation option must meet all the size standards for automation compatibility outlined in the previous module:

	Minimum	Maximum
<b>Height</b>	3 1/2 inches	6 1/8 inches
<b>Length*</b>	5 inches	11 1/2 inches
<b>Thickness</b>	0.007 inch	1/4 inch

Letter-size mail which is more than 4 1/4 inches high or more than 6 inches long (postcard-size maximum) must be at least 0.009" thick.

Qualifying pieces must also meet the aspect ratio requirements. If the aspect ratio of a letter-size mailpiece is not between 1.3 to 2.5, the piece is not automation-compatible.

## MAXIMUM WEIGHT

The maximum weight for upgradable presorted First-Class Mail and Standard Mail is 2.5 ounces.

### ADDRESS BLOCK LOCATION FOR LETTER-SIZE MAIL

The optical character reader (OCR) can sort your letter-size mail to its proper destination, but first, it must be able to locate the delivery address and read it. The camera eye of the OCR looks for the delivery address within an imaginary rectangle on each letter-size mailpiece.

The entire address should be within this imaginary rectangle; all delivery address lines must be contained within this imaginary rectangle called the OCR read area.

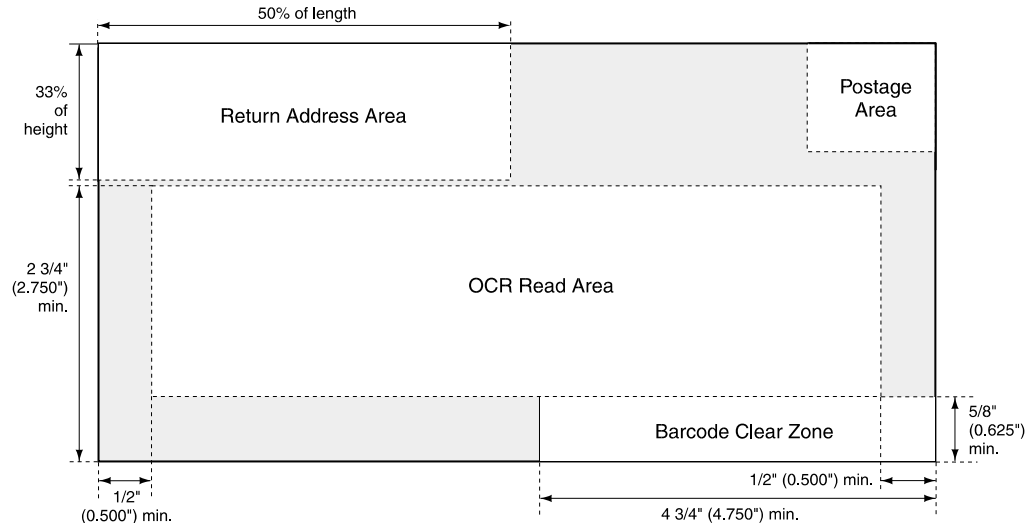
This area extends from the bottom edge of a mailpiece  $\frac{5}{8}$  inch high at its lowest point, and from the bottom edge of the mailpiece  $2\frac{3}{4}$  inches high at its highest point. The side parameters are  $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch margins on both the left and right edges (A word of caution: Be sure not to place any portion of the return address in the OCR read area).

Extraneous nonaddress printing appearing in the OCR read area must be positioned above the delivery address line and as far away from the address block as possible. It is best to place nonaddress information and extraneous print higher than  $2\frac{3}{4}$  inches from the bottom edge of the mailpiece. This applies to graphics of any kind, including company logos.

### BARCODE CLEAR ZONE

The barcode clear zone is the rectangular area in the lower right corner of the address side of cards and letter-size mailpieces. It extends from the bottom edge of the mailpiece up  $\frac{5}{8}$  inch, and from the right edge of the mailpiece it extends to the left  $4\frac{3}{4}$  inches. This is the area where a barcode may be preapplied by the mailer or printed by a Postal Service OCR. Nothing other than a POSTNET delivery point barcode should appear here.

### OCR READ AREA



## CONSTRUCTION

Mailpieces qualifying for automated discounts and pieces submitted as upgradable are eventually sorted by the Postal Service on the same pieces of equipment, the barcode sorters. Therefore, the physical construction requirements for upgradable mailpieces are exactly the same as for pieces submitted as part of a qualifying barcoded mailing (see previous module). This includes the sealing, folding, and tabbing requirements for self-mailers.

## PAPER STOCK

Paper stock for letter-size mail must be of a light color (white or pastel), and the address and/or barcode must be black (or very dark) to provide adequate contrast for automated processing.

The address bearing surface, whether it is an envelope, card, label, or insert, must have the ability to reflect sufficient light. White backgrounds are preferred, but light pastels are acceptable if they meet the reflectance guidelines. The background reflectance must be at least 50 percent in the red portion and 45 percent in the green portion of the optical spectrum.

## Paper Types

Certain materials are incompatible with postal automation because they cannot be transported at high speeds through mail processing equipment or they do not allow quality printing of a barcode on the mailpiece for optimal scanning.

These materials include polywrap, shrinkwrap, spun-bonded olefin, and other plastic-like coverings. Certain types of coated papers should also be avoided if the coating is so glossy that it prevents the water-based ink used to print a postal-applied barcode from drying within one second.

Avoid using textured paper (paper with other than a smooth surface) if the texture adversely affects print quality (that is, causes broken characters or smudged spaces). Because florescent paper can confuse the postage detector on the postal facer-canceler machines, you should also avoid using such paper.

Consult the mailpiece design analyst about paper stock before you produce your mailpiece.

## Dark Fibers and Patterns

Envelope paper and paper material on other letter-size mailpieces, such as folded self-mailers, must have sufficient opacity (density) to prevent any printing on the inside of the mailpiece from showing through in the OCR read area or in the barcode clear zone.

Some ink patterns used to make security envelopes (designs placed on the inner walls of an envelope) can permeate the envelope material and show (bleed) through. To make sure nonaddress printing does not interfere with the OCR, the print contrast ratio (PCR) of any print bleed through must be less than 15 percent, as measured on the outside of the envelope, in both the red and green portions of the optical spectrum.

Paper containing dark fibers or background patterns is not recommended. These can cause interference during OCR and BCS processing. The dark patterns can be mistaken for part of the address or barcode information, causing missorts and delays.

If you use such paper, make sure that the print contrast ratio (PCR) between the fibers (or pattern) and the background does not exceed 15 percent in the red and the green portions of the optical spectrum. The mailpiece design analyst can test the print contrast ratio for you.

## Halftone Screens

Background colors printed in halftone screens (colors and images formed from patterns of dots) that are less than 200 lines per inch can be detected by the OCR and must not be used. The OCR can actually image the individual dots when the screens are less dense.

## CLOSURES

Closures can jam postal equipment and damage mail during processing; you must not use clasps, staples, strings, buttons, and similar protrusions for closing letter-size pieces.

## WINDOW ENVELOPES

Often mailers will design letter-size mailpieces with window envelopes. If using a window envelope for more than one style or size of insert, be sure that the window is positioned properly to accommodate address placement for each insert. The address must be completely visible as the insert shifts within the envelope.

Mailings prepared in window envelopes and claimed as upgradable must pass a tap test at acceptance. Envelopes are tapped to the left, right, and bottom. The pieces must meet the required clearances after being tapped in each of these three directions or the mail is ineligible for this preparation option.

For best results, always consult your firm's forms vendor and the Postal Service mailpiece design analyst (MDA) before designing new envelopes or postcards. This is especially true if you plan to apply for automation rates.

## Window Dimensions

Always design your window envelopes and their inserts for maximum automation compatibility. The window, whether covered or opened, must be placed within the OCR read area and cannot encroach on the barcode clear zone by more than 1/8 inch (bottom of window must be at least 1/2 inch from bottom of envelope but 5/8 inch is preferred).

The greater 5/8 inch clearance is required for mailpieces submitted to private vendors using optical character readers equipped with the FASTForward™ technology.

The mailpiece must be designed so that the entire address block is visible throughout the entire range of motion of the insert within the envelope. For OCR readability, a minimum of 1/8 inch of clear space must be maintained between the address block and the top, bottom, and side edges of the window when the insert is moved to its full limits within the envelope.

## Window Size

The size of the window should be kept to a minimum, consistent with the 1/8 inch clearance requirement between the address and the edges of the window. This allows maximum use of the insert for information other than addressing. No markings, printing, or die cuts, other than the window edges, are permitted in the OCR read area on either side of or below any of the delivery address lines.

### Window Material

Envelope windows should be covered with a clear transparent material and glued securely on all edges. The window material must be free of wrinkles, streaks, fogging, or any other condition that might obscure the address.

Window material commonly referred to as glassine may be used only if the address information measured through the window meets a print contrast ratio of 45 percent. Tinted or smoke-colored windows are not acceptable for automated processing. The recommended window cover material is cellophane or polystyrene.

The mailpiece design analyst can test print contrast ratio, print reflectance difference, and background reflectance using a tool called an envelope reflectance meter (ERM).

### FLEXIBILITY

As with automation rate pieces, your upgradable letter-size mailpiece and its contents must be reasonably flexible to pass around revolving wheels and along belts in automated processing equipment, and constructed from standard envelope papers and card stock as previously noted.

### LABELS AND STICKERS

Address labels and stickers placed on the outside of letter mail must be applied using methods and materials that prevent labels from being damaged or removed during high-speed processing.

Address labels should not contain extraneous printing or designs that interfere with the ability of automated equipment to read the address. Stickers containing other than address information must not be placed in the OCR read area or barcode clear zone.

### Permanent Labels

Permanent labels and stickers (not designed to be removed or reused) should be applied with permanent adhesive or glue. Dextrin-based (recyclable) adhesives are recommended.

Pressure-sensitive peel-off labels and stickers intended to be permanent on letter mail must have a minimum peel adhesion value of 8 ounces per inch. Manufacturers and suppliers of pressure-sensitive labels and stickers can provide you with information about the peel adhesion values of their products.

**EXERCISE 7 - 1**

Directions: Remove this page from the binder. Take out the Notice 67. It is the large clear plastic overlay included with the resource kit. Hold the template at arm's length against a neutral background. You will see a number of positioning marks and inscribed gauges.

For now, look for the lower right alignment mark on the template. You should see a bold corner marking in the lower right, with the text: "ALIGN WITH RIGHT BOTTOM CORNER OF MAILPIECE TO CHECK BARCODE AND ADDRESS BLOCK LOCATIONS."

Align the corner marking on Notice 67 with the lower right corner of the samples. Using the shaded area in the center of the overlay marked "OCR READ AREA," determine the answers for each sample question. Circle the letter of the correct answer.

**SAMPLE A**

JANE DOE  
1 ANY LANE  
ANYWHERE US 12345-6789

1. Is the address in sample A correctly positioned?
  - a) yes
  - b) no



## EXERCISE 7 - 1

SAMPLE B

*Don't Delay!*

JANE DOE  
1 ANY LANE  
ANYWHERE US 12345-6789

*Buy Now! Save Later!*

2. Is the address in sample B correctly positioned?
  - a) yes
  - b) no
3. Is sample B OCR compatible?
  - a) yes
  - b) no

**EXERCISE 7 - 1**

Hold the Notice 67 again at arm's length. At the left edge, in the center of the template, you should see a shaded form in the shape of a capital "C" marked "ADDRESS / WINDOW CLEARANCE".

Remove this page from the binder. Use the gauge to verify whether or not the samples below meet the 1/8-inch clearance requirement of address printing to label or window edge or diecut.

Circle the correct answer to each question. Replace all pages, and check your answers against the answer key on the following page.

**SAMPLE C**

JANE DOE  
1 ANY LANE  
ANYWHERE US 12345-6789

4. Is the address in sample C correctly positioned?
- a) yes
  - b) no



### ANSWERS TO EXERCISE 7 - 1

1. **no**; it is not at least 5/8 inch above the bottom edge of the mailpiece.
2. **yes**; the address is completely contained within the OCR read area.
3. **no**; there is printing (teaser copy) in the barcode clear zone, and there is nonaddress printing (teaser copy) in the OCR read area that is below the delivery address line (1 ANY LANE).
4. **no**; there is not at least 1/8 inch clearance between the left edge of the address printing and the label or window edge.

## ADDRESS "READABILITY"

An upgradable letter-size mailpiece requires an accurate, complete, readable address that can be successfully scanned and interpreted by an OCR.

## TYPOGRAPHY

Typography is the typesetting of letters and characters to form words that can be printed and read. The two most important factors in typesetting are legibility and readability. Legibility measures whether type face characters can be perceived and distinguished from one another. Readability measures how easily and quickly typeset words can be read.

### Type Styles

Type styles that are pleasant to the human eye are not necessarily easily readable by the OCR. Simple sans serif (nonserifed) type styles with uniform stroke width are best for OCR processing.

Avoid type styles described as bold, script, extended, condensed, italicized, and highly stylized; these styles are not OCR-readable.

### Character Height (80 mils to 200 mils)

Type sizes between 8 and 18 points (a printer's unit of measurement) are suitable for automated processing; however, 10- or 12-point type size is preferred. Character height will vary from one type style to another. In fact, some 8-point type might be too small for the OCR to read.

If either 8- or 18-point type is used, character height and width should be checked carefully to ensure that they meet requirements. When 8-point type is used, the address should be printed in all uppercase characters to achieve the minimum 80 mil (0.080 inch) character height.

## DIFFERENT POINT SIZE EXAMPLES:

12-, 14-, and 16-point "Arial"

Aa

Bb

Cc

Use the CHARACTER HEIGHT gauge, inscribed in the upper left of Notice 67, *Automation Template*, to measure whether the above type style meets the minimum and maximum character height requirements for all illustrated point sizes.

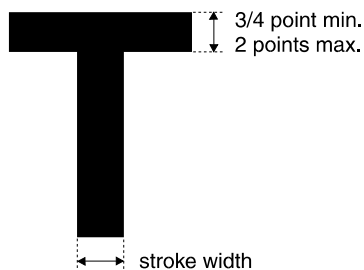


### Notice 67, Automation Template

### Character Stroke Width

Generally, the stroke width depends on the character size. The width of address character strokes should be uniform and between 3/4 point and 2 points. Light or bold type styles do not meet this requirement and are not compatible with OCR processing.

## CHARACTER STROKE WIDTH



### Character Height to Width Ratio

The height of the address characters divided by their width should be between 1.1 and 1.7. Most normal type styles (fonts) fall within this range; however, many extended fonts include characters that do not meet this requirement.



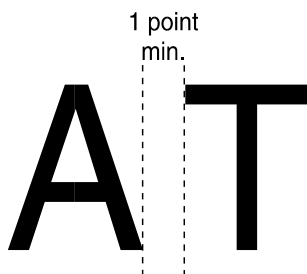
Notice 67, Automation Template has lines inscribed in the upper left corner of the template in 1/2-point increments that can be used to measure these spacing requirements.

## Character Spacing

Character spacing is one of the most important parameters for OCR readability. A clear vertical column of 3/4 point to 3 points should be maintained between characters; 1 point character spacing is preferred. The OCR requires this clear space in order to successfully image and read the individual characters.

*Kerning*, the overlapping or nesting of characters (used in some font styles for easier reading), is not compatible with OCR processing. When kerning is used, the OCR may force the segmentation of some of the characters. This results in split characters that are difficult to read.

## CHARACTER SPACING



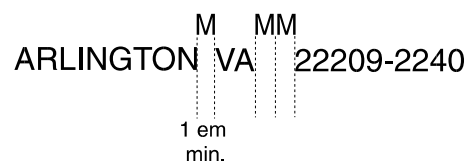
## Character Pitch

The center-to-center spacing between two adjacent characters in a word is known as *character pitch*. When the pitch of the characters is equal, each character uses the same amount of space regardless of the letter. This style of type presentation is referred to as monospacing and results in an equal number of characters per inch. The use of 10 to 12 characters per inch is recommended for OCR readability.

## Word Spacing

A clear vertical space of 1 to 5 “em” (width of a full “M” character) spaces should be maintained between words of the address. This includes spacing between the state abbreviation and the ZIP+4 Code. The recommended spacing between words is one to two “em” spaces.

## WORD SPACING



## Line Spacing

A clear space is required between each line of the address to allow the OCR to properly interpret the address information. Line spacing is measured from the lowest hanging character in the upper line to the highest standing character in the line below. Characters in one line of the address should not touch characters in another line. Spacing should be uniform and not less than 2 points or more than 29 points; the preferred line spacing is 4 points.

## LINE SPACING



## Left Justified

All lines of text contained in the address block should be left justified. Address block content and format was covered in module four; *Addressing*.

## Uppercase vs. Lowercase

Due to improved character recognition, the USPS prefers that you print all delivery address information in capital letters.

## Punctuation

To reduce the amount of data necessary for the OCR to interpret, the USPS prefers that you omit all punctuation in delivery addresses.

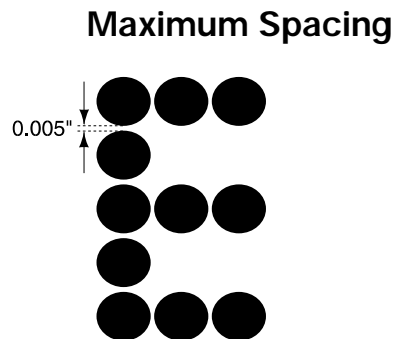
## PRINT QUALITY

The performance of the optical character reader (OCR) depends upon the print quality of addresses. Successful OCR interpretation is best accomplished when you use the following guidelines:

- Printed characters should present the highest contrast possible relative to the background they are printed on. The OCR works best when the address is printed or typed in black ink on a white background. Other color combinations may be used if a print contrast ratio (PCR) of at least 40 percent is maintained in both the red and green portions of the optical spectrum. Print contrast ratio is a measurement of the contrast between the ink used in the address and the background material on which it appears.
- Print contrast should be uniform throughout each character to prevent the appearance of broken characters.

- Type should be clean, dark, and sharp. Smudges, voids within character strokes, and extraneous ink outside character boundaries adversely affect OCR processing.
- Dot matrix characters can be read by the OCR if the dots that form each character touch one another or are not separated by more than 5/1000 inch (0.005 inch). As ribbons on dot matrix printers become used, characters become faint and are difficult to read. Printing equipment should be carefully maintained and adjusted to achieve the best possible print quality. Change ribbons and add toner frequently to maintain constant ink supplies.
- Reverse printing is not acceptable.

## DOT MATRIX CHARACTERS



**Ink Characteristics**

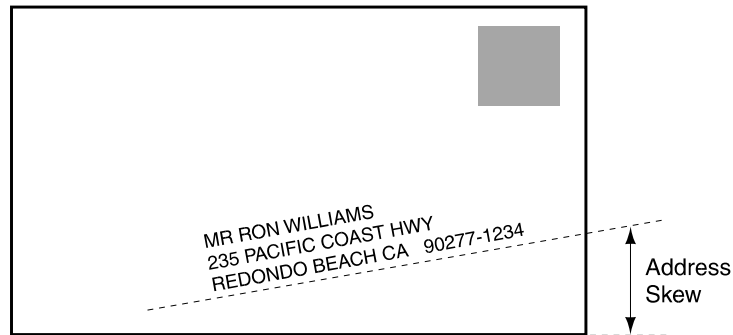
The ink used to print the address must contain at least one part carbon black ink in order to ensure the required print contrast ratio (PCR) between paper and ink. Two parts black is preferred. Fluorescent and phosphorescent inks are not suitable for automated processing.

**Address Block Skew**

The address block should not be slanted or skewed (tilted) by more than 5 degrees relative to the bottom edge of the mailpiece. This standard is especially important for the proper application of address labels.

**INTERFERING PRINT**

You should avoid using forms, labels, or envelope inserts containing preprinted lines, outline boxes, or prompting words such as "TO:" or "FROM:" in the delivery address area. These nonaddress elements can interfere with successful OCR recognition and interpretation of the delivery address information.

**ADDRESS BLOCK SKEW**



## EXERCISE 7 - 2

Directions: Circle the best response or fill in the blank to answer the following questions. Check your answers when you have completed the exercise.

1. OCRs read addresses on letter-size mail and print a barcode in the barcode \_\_\_\_\_ zone in the lower right corner of the mailpiece.
2. Mailpieces prepared as part of an upgradable mailing need only meet the physical construction requirements for processing on USPS automated sorting equipment.
  - a) true
  - b) false
3. You should place the delivery address on a letter-size mailpiece entirely within the OCR \_\_\_\_\_ area.
4. The delivery address on a letter-size mailpiece should be placed no closer than 5/8 inch to the bottom edge of the mailpiece and no higher than:
  - a) 2 1/4 inches
  - b) 2 1/2 inches
  - c) 2 3/4 inches
  - d) 4 inches
5. The Postal Service prefers that the bottom edge of the window die cut on a letter-size window envelope be at least 1/2 inch from the bottom edge of the mailpiece.
  - a) true
  - b) false
6. Which of the following best describes a characteristic of an OCR-readable type style?
  - a) italicized
  - b) sans serif
  - c) condensed
  - d) script
7. An OCR-readable mailpiece should include a delivery address printed with ink containing at least \_\_\_\_\_ part carbon black ink.
8. Reverse printing (characters printed as white knock-outs on black paper or dark background) is OCR-readable.
  - a) true
  - b) false

## ANSWERS TO EXERCISE 7 - 2

1. **clear**; the barcode clear zone extends 5/8 inch up from the bottom and 4 3/4 inches in from the right edge of a letter-size mailpiece. No discernible printing of any kind should appear in this clear area (other than a properly formatted POSTNET barcode).
2. **b, false**; in addition to the physical construction requirements, pieces submitted as part of an upgradable mailing must also meet the requirements for location of the delivery address and barcode clear zone, and ink absorption and reflectance requirements.
3. **read**; the OCR "looks" for the delivery address within this imaginary rectangle.
4. **c, 2 3/4**; the delivery address on an OCR-compatible mailpiece must be entirely within the "OCR read area" as defined by these boundaries:  
Left: 1/2 inch from the left edge of the mailpiece.  
Right: 1/2 inch from the right edge of the mailpiece.  
Top: 2 3/4 inches from the bottom edge of the piece.  
Bottom: 5/8 inch from the bottom edge of the piece.
5. **b, false**; the Postal Service prefers that the bottom edge of the window die cut on a letter-size window envelope be at least 5/8 inch from the bottom edge of the mailpiece. The 5/8-inch positioning guideline becomes a requirement for mailpieces submitted after processing on privately owned commercial OCRs using the *FASTForward*<sup>™</sup> technology for applying move update information.
6. **b, sans serif**; a simple, monospaced, sans serif type style is preferred for OCR recognition.
7. **one**; ink colors consisting of two parts carbon black are recommended.
8. **b, false**; the OCR is incapable of properly interpreting reverse printing.

## FLAT-SIZE MAILPIECES

Unlike letter-size mailpieces, there is no special preparation option for nonbarcoded flat-size mailings. However, mailers who meet these voluntary guidelines ensure that their mailings receive the most expeditious postal handling possible.

In general, mailers wishing to design postal friendly flats should follow the standards for FSM 881 qualifying flat-size mailpieces outlined in the previous module.

## DESIGNING THE IDEAL MACHINABLE FLAT

The ideal size for a First-Class, 1 1/2-ounce enveloped flat is 9 inches (height) by 12 inches (length) by 1/4 inch (thickness). The ideal catalog or magazine-style mailpiece size is 11 inches (height) by 8 1/2 inches (length) by 1/4 inch (thickness). Flat-size mailpieces that comply with these voluntary ideal guidelines contribute greatly to cost avoidance, consistent delivery, and reduced undeliverable mail.

## CONSTRUCTION

Covers of catalogs and magazines should be constructed of paper stock that is at least three times thicker than the inner pages.

Shrinkwrapped mailpieces and plastic or poly envelopes must be fully filled and sealed. The coefficient of friction must be from .20 to .25 and electrostatic buildup must be less than 2,000 volts. Excess plastic wrap should not exceed 3/8 inch. Unsealed plastic wrapping will balloon open and cause jams.

Plastic-wrapped flats are often run last on the FSMs in case the mailpieces jam. If jams occur, the problem mailpieces will be sent to manual operations and could be delayed.

## FLEXIBILITY AND RIGIDITY

In addition to size, shape, and material used to create the flat, flexibility and rigidity of the mailpiece are also important. For example, stiffness determines whether a flat mailpiece is machinable. If a flat is too stiff, it will not go around turns in the flat sorting machine; if too flimsy, it may jam and get caught in the metal joints of the machine.

A flat-size mailpiece, when held up by its bottom edge, should not fold over under its own weight. If the flat folds under its own weight, it is probably too flimsy for processing on an FSM. It should, however, bend along its length, to pass the turnaround wheel on the FSM. Characteristics of machinable flats are listed in Publication 63, *Designing Flat Mail*.

Pens, pencils, keys, large coins, and/or rigid items are not recommended for inclusion because they can damage the mailpiece and the processing equipment. Items such as credit cards, which are attached to the contents of the mail, are usually acceptable.

For machinability, contents should be uniformly and securely enclosed to avoid shifting. Shifting can jam the flat sorting machine because of erratic movement as the flat passes through the machine to its designated bin. Flats containing rigid cardboard-type materials will be considered machinable if they are within acceptable dimensions.

## FLAT MAIL MACHINABILITY TESTER

The Postal Service developed a flat mail machinability tester to determine if flat-size mailpieces meet the machinability requirements to qualify for a barcoded postage rate. You can have your flat mail tested on this device by contacting your local mailpiece design analyst.



## ADDRESS BLOCK LOCATION FOR FLAT-SIZE MAIL

Flat-size mail is sorted on a flat sorting machine. The flats are manually fed into the machine by a clerk who reads the ZIP Code contained in the address block, and keys the ZIP Code information onto a numeric keypad.

The flat is fed into the machine with the bound or folded edge to the right. Therefore, the address should be clearly visible when the flat is held facing the viewer with the bound edge to the right. The address may be placed virtually anywhere on the appropriate side of the flat. It is not necessary to maintain the OCR read area or barcode clear zone requirements because the flat is not sorted on the automated machinery used to sort letter-size mail.

## FLAT MAIL OCR (FMOCR)

Since the deployment of optical character readers for the Postal Service's flat sorting equipment, flat-size mailpieces can also benefit from meeting the OCR readability guidelines covered in the letter-size portion of this module, particularly those guidelines that involve address print size and quality.

Here are some additional guidelines to follow to ensure delivery addresses for flat-size mailpieces are readable:

- Maintain good contrast between the address printing and the background.
- Proper font size.
- Delivery address left justified, not centered.
- Maintain a clear zone within and around the entire address block.
- Locate the delivery address below and to the right of the return address.

These guidelines help ensure human readability, too! Be sure to follow them if at all possible.

## PROBLEM CHARACTERISTICS

FSMs have problems with certain mailpiece designs and construction characteristics, such as:

- Flimsies, which are pieces too lightweight to withstand pusher finger pressure. These fold over, causing the machine to jam.
- Tall flat-size pieces that do not fit between size-limiting guards.
- Tall flat-size pieces that can be inserted, and begin to transport, but catch on the top edge of the screen cover guarding the turnaround wheel at the end of the machine (if the piece is more than 11 3/4 inches tall).
- Very thick flat-size pieces that may jam between the turnaround wheel and the guide or may throw the belt off track as the belt rounds the end of the machine.
- Flat-size pieces that are very rigid and larger than 7 inches (height) by 7 inches (length) by 1/4 inch (thickness) may jam at the turnaround.
- Newspaper-like flimsies, especially when lightweight.
- Partially filled envelopes that can allow the pusher fingers to bend the envelope.
- Plastic/polywrapped flat-size pieces that have an overhang of plastic longer than 3/8 inch from any edge of the contents can cause jams in the diverter gates.

In addition, FSM operators have difficulty when:

- Address labels come off the mailpiece or more than one address label is attached to a mailpiece.
- Mailpieces stick together.
- The address is not oriented properly, requiring the operator to turn the flat over onto the feeder belt.
- Addresses inside window envelopes are not in full view.

## DETACHED ADDRESS LABELS (DALs) STANDARD MAIL FLATS

Saturation mailings of Standard Mail flats or merchandise samples may, at the option of the mailer, be mailed using detached address labels. A saturation mailing is defined as a mailing sent to at least 75 percent of the total addresses within each carrier route or 90 percent of the residential addresses within the route, whichever is less. Deliveries need not be made to every carrier route of a delivery unit.

### Preparation of (DAL) Flats

The flats must be placed in containers labeled with:

- The post office of delivery.
- The 5-digit ZIP Code delivery area.
- A description of the mailing.
- The name of the mailer, his representative, and telephone number.
- The number of flats in the outer carton.
- Instructions to open and distribute with matching cards.

### Prior Notification

A letter describing the nature of the mailing must be sent to the offices of delivery 10 days in advance of the mailing. The letter must include all information listed in DMM A060.

### Address Cards

The address for each flat must be placed on an address card. There must be one and only one address card for each flat.

Format, physical requirements, packaging, notification, and labeling of cartons for the address cards are shown in DMM A060 for mailers wishing to mail Standard Mail flats in this manner.

### Excess Pieces

The mailer may request that the post office hold excess pieces for the mailer to pick up within 15 days of the requested delivery date at each delivery unit. No additional postage will be charged if the mailer chooses to pick up excess pieces. Alternately, the mailer may request that excess pieces be returned as postage-due mail.

### Postage

Postage is based on the combined weight of the item and the detached address label (DAL). Postage for Periodicals flats must be prepaid. Postage for Standard Mail flats and merchandise samples and Bound Printed Matter must be paid by permit imprint, which must appear on each DAL.

## PARCELS

By definition, only those parcels adhering to the parameters given for machinable parcels (module three, *Processing Categories*) are compatible with USPS mechanized parcel sorting equipment.

Poorly written or poorly placed addresses slow down parcel sorting operations. This is a major cause of parcels being sent to the wrong destination. Parcels are sorted primarily by their destination ZIP Code until they reach the post office of delivery. The identification and readability of the address is critical to the sorting process.

Even if you are not barcoding, you can help ensure the efficient handling of your parcels if you follow the proper address format covered in module four, *Addressing*, and these guidelines:

- Ensure that the ZIP Code is clearly legible; the initial sortation of the parcel is based primarily on the 5-digit ZIP Code information.
- Ensure that the address is parallel to the longest edge of the parcel.
- Format all lines of the address with a uniform left margin.
- Ensure that the address is legible.
- Ensure that the delivery address and return address are on the same side of the parcel and not repeated on any other side. Always keep the delivery address well separated from the return address and have it clearly marked "TO."
- Ensure that the return address is placed in the upper left corner of the address area above the delivery address. Always keep the return address well separated from the delivery address and have it clearly marked "FROM."
- Ensure that the delivery address, return address, and endorsements all read in the same direction.

## Nonautomation Mail SUMMARY

The USPS continues to offer a wide array of preparation options for mailpieces that are not, or cannot be, submitted for automation discounts. Each class of mail, and each processing category, offers a nonautomation preparation option available for the mailer.

However, by continuing to adhere to as many of the automation construction, positioning, and printing requirements as possible, you can help ensure that your mailings are handled in the most efficient manner possible: by USPS automated equipment.

These requirements, as well as the automation requirements from the previous module, are summarized in Publication 25, *Designing Letter and Reply Mail*. Publication 25 is an important reference for anyone involved in the design and production of letter-size mailpieces.



### Pub 25, Designing Letter and Reply Mail

Guidelines for designing flat-size mailpieces are given in Publication 63, *Designing Flat Mail*, which is also included on the Postal Explorer CD.



### Pub 63, Designing Flat Mail

Your local mailpiece design analyst (MDA) can guide you in every phase of the design process, ensuring that your mailpieces qualify for the discounts and preparation options as originally intended. This, combined with an effective internal quality control process, will guarantee you a smooth and uneventful mailing experience.

**EXERCISE 7 - 3**

Directions: Circle the best response or fill in the blank to answer the following questions. Check your answers when you have completed the exercise.

1. In general, mailers wishing to design flat-size mailpieces that are easily and efficiently handled by the Postal Service should follow the requirements for FSM \_\_\_\_\_ compatibility.
2. Flimsy or very thick flats can \_\_\_\_\_ the flat sorting machine (FSM).
3. A flat-size mailpiece, when held up by its bottom edge, should not fold over. If the piece does, it is probably too \_\_\_\_\_ for processing on an FSM 881.
4. Flat-size mailpieces can also benefit from improved service and handling by following the OCR addressing requirements.
  - a) true
  - b) false
5. Which of the following is a characteristic of a good, readable, delivery address:
  - a) good contrast between the address printing and the background
  - b) all lines left justified
  - c) a clear zone around the entire delivery address
  - d) all of the above
6. The mailer must notify the local delivery post offices, in writing, 10 days prior to submitting a Detached Address Label (DAL) mailing.
  - a) true
  - b) false
7. The delivery address should be parallel to the \_\_\_\_\_ edge of a parcel.
8. When addressing a parcel, ensure that the \_\_\_\_\_ address, the \_\_\_\_\_ address and any endorsements all read in the same direction.

## ANSWERS TO EXERCISE 7 - 3

1. **881**; due to the number of machines deployed, pieces designed to meet the requirements of the FSM 881 will be handled more efficiently than other types of flat-size mailpieces (other than prebarcoded).
2. **jam**; ideally, flimsy pieces should be enveloped.
3. **flimsy**; extremely flimsy flat-size mailpieces are not easily handled by USPS flat sorting equipment.
4. **a, true**; even if not processed on sorting machinery equipped with optical character recognition capability, following these requirements also helps to ensure human readability.
5. **d, all of the above**; these are all attributes of a good, readable, delivery address.
6. **a, true**; the local delivery office needs notification in order to be properly prepared to handle this type of mailing.
7. **longest**; following this guideline allows postal personnel to more efficiently locate the delivery address.
8. **delivery, return**; this helps to ensure efficient postal handling.

All mailpieces delivered by the Postal Service must bear an indication of postage payment. In addition to providing payment for delivery, the Postal Service uses this indication to verify that postage was paid, and at what rate. Without this proof of payment, the Postal Service will return the mailpiece to the sender.

Mailers presenting presorted or other discounted mailings may choose from one of three basic options for postage payment: *precanceled stamps*, *meter stamps*, and *permit imprints*. The first two options require the mailer to physically affix postage to the mailpiece. Permit imprints, however, are typically printed as part of the envelope manufacturing process. You may not normally combine any of these methods within a single mailing unless specifically authorized in writing by the USPS.

This module will cover the basic requirements of each payment option, along with the associated fees and basic rate markings.



## WHAT YOU WILL LEARN ABOUT POSTAGE PAYMENT METHODS

Upon completion of this module, you should be able to do the following:

- Define the three basic postage payment options: *Precanceled Stamps*, *Meter Stamps*, and *Permit Imprint*.
- Discuss the fees and applications necessary for each.
- Be able to define the features of each option.
- Identify the proper content of and format for permit imprints.
- Explain how to enter discounted mailings into the mailstream.



Not only are precanceled stamps the least expensive postage payment option, they also provide the most “personalized” appearance.

## PRECANCELED STAMPS

The Postal Service cancels postage stamps to prevent reuse after it renders service. A precanceled stamp is a postage stamp like any other, with a definable cost and value. Mailers may purchase and affix these stamps prior to mailing. Unlike regular postage stamps however, the USPS does not manually cancel a precanceled stamp with the date of deposit. Either the mailer provides the cancellation, or it appears as the rate marking on the face of the stamp.

The most common precanceled stamps are those that the USPS preprints with a rate marking. With the proper authorization, you may purchase these at a Postal Service retail counter and affix them to your presorted mailings. In addition, a mailer may obtain authorization for their own cancellation markings. For further information on this topic see DMM P023.



### DMM P023.3

This course will cover the use of precanceled stamps from the Postal Service with the rate category as the cancellation. This method is commonly used by many presort mailers.

## Authorization And Fees

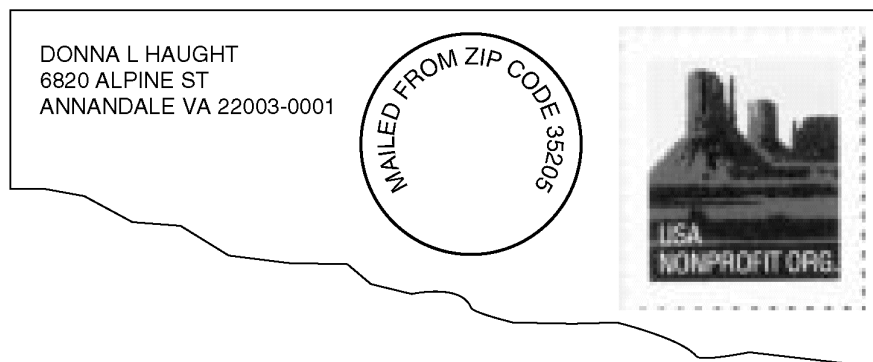
Mailers complete Form 3615, *Mailing Permit Application and Customer Profile*, to obtain authorization to use stamps precanceled by the Postal Service. Present this form to the post office where you will deposit your precanceled mailings. There is no fee for this authorization.

Your authorization is limited to this post office. To mail with precanceled stamps at another post office, you must also file an application there.

You may use precanceled stamps as a postage payment method for presorted First-Class Mail and Standard Mail mailings. Pay only the required annual fees for the classes you intend to mail. You do not need to pay an annual fee if you are using a vendor to prepare and submit your precanceled stamp mailings and the vendor has already paid the proper fee.

## Placement

You must affix precanceled stamps to the upper right corner of the envelope, address label, or address area.



## Return Address

Mailpieces with precanceled stamps must have a complete, domestic, return address. Once the piece enters the mailstream, the return address is the only way to determine the sender. If the return address is not in the delivery area of the post office where the mailer holds his precanceled authorization, the mailer must either:

- Put a cancellation endorsement to the left of the postage showing: city, state abbreviation, and ZIP Code of the office of mailing.

OR

- Provide a cancellation using the verbiage: "Mailed From ZIP Code," followed by the 5-Digit ZIP Code of the mailing office.

OR

- Submit, with their mailing, a copy of the postage statement and a sample mailpiece in a stamped envelope addressed to the postmaster of the office in the return address.

These measures allow the Postal Service to locate the sender if there are any future questions about the mailing.

## Rate Markings

If the basic rate markings do not appear on the stamp as the precancellation method, you must add them to the mailpiece. Any additional markings required by the rate category claimed (e.g., ECRWSS for Enhanced Carrier Route Walk Sequence Saturation) must also appear. See the illustration on the previous page for an example of the basic rate marking as the cancellation method.

## Deposit and Acceptance

Mail with precanceled stamps as postage payment must be deposited at the post office where the authorization is held. The mailing must be presented for acceptance. That is, you must give the mailing, in person, to a postal representative. Mail bearing precanceled postage, and all presorted, discounted mailings in general, must not be dropped in collection boxes.

Precanceled stamps are usually nondenominated. That is, they do not bear on their face a numeric postage amount. Mailers using them must pay the difference between the postage amount represented by the stamp and the rate charged for each piece. This is done when the mailing is presented for acceptance.

## Restrictions

Mailers may not use precanceled postage stamps on boxes, cases, bags, or other potentially reusable mailing containers. This restriction helps to protect postal revenues by preventing reuse of postage.



## METER STAMPS

A meter stamp is a postage payment method that prints a denomination of postage directly on the envelope itself. You do not apply a physical stamp. Instead, ink from a postage meter prints a meter stamp directly on the piece. Mailers may also print meter stamps onto an adhesive tape, called a meter strip. Mailers apply this meter strip to the mailpiece as postage.

A postage meter is set or filled with postage by the Postal Service. You pay for this postage when the Postal Service sets your meter. As your mailpieces are metered with an amount of postage via the meter stamp, the postage set in your meter decreases by the same amount.

### Authorization And Fees

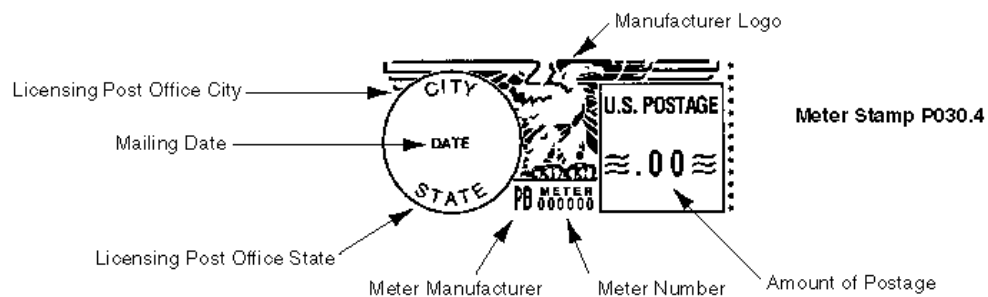
To use a postage meter, you must first lease one from an authorized manufacturer. The Postal Service lists approved meter manufacturers in DMM P030.1.2.



**DMM P030.1.2**

You must complete Form 3601-A, *Application or Update for a License to Lease and Use Postage Meters*, to obtain authorization to use your meter. You may file this form either with the meter manufacturer's representative or at the post office where you will enter you metered mailings.

### BASIC METER STAMP DESIGN



Mailers who will present discounted mailings must also complete Form 3615, *Mailing Permit Application and Customer Profile*. Present this form to the post office where you hold your meter license. Submission of discounted mailings requires payment of an annual fee, unless you are using a vendor who has already paid the appropriate fee.

The Postal Service must periodically examine your meter to ensure that it is operating properly. Postal regulations require you to present your meter to the licensing post office for this examination.

### Placement

You must apply meter stamps to the upper right corner of the envelope, address label, or tag. Meter stamps must be legible and not overlap. Those not meeting this standard are not valid for postage.

### Content And Format

At a minimum, all meter stamps must show the city and state of the licensing post office, the meter number, and the amount of postage. To prevent reuse, meter stamps printed on adhesive meter strips (tape) must also include at least the month and year.

The day, month, and year must appear on any meter stamp used for First-Class Mail, and on any mail using special services. You must use a special fluorescent ink to print the meter stamp on all letter-size mail.

## Return Address

Mailpieces using meter stamps do not require a return address. Each meter stamp bears a unique meter number. The Postal Service can use this number to determine the sender of the mailpiece.

## Rate Markings

You may include required postal markings as part of the meter impression. You may add rate markings, such as "Presorted," to the meter stamp impression by purchasing the required plate from your meter manufacturer.

## Deposit And Acceptance

Mailers must deposit meter stamped mailings at the licensing post office. As a convenience, you may deposit small quantities of single-piece, full rate mail at offices other than the licensing post office.

The postage amount printed in the meter stamp must be the exact amount due in postage for that piece, except as permitted for discounted, presorted mailings. The date in the meter postmark must be the actual date of deposit.

Mailers preparing discounted metered mailings must pay the appropriate annual fee and present the mailings directly to postal acceptance personnel. You must prepare these mailings according to the standards for the class of mail and the rate claimed. Within certain limits, each mailpiece in a

metered mailing does not have to be identical in weight. As a convenience, mailers may affix the lowest valid rate of postage in the mailing to each piece and pay the difference at the time of mailing. However, for First-Class Mail presorted mailings, you must affix the charge for each additional ounce to each piece individually.

## Restrictions

Postage meters are capable of actually printing postage on demand. For this reason, the Postal Service places a number of restrictions on their use. Some of these restrictions include:

- You may not affix postage meter stamps to any item delivered by other carriers.
- The licensee must keep the meter in their custody at all times.
- The licensee must notify both the meter manufacturer's representative and the licensing post office of any change in the licensee's name, address, telephone number.
- Upon request, the licensee must make any meters in their possession available for examination.
- The licensee must immediately report a suspected defective or malfunctioning meter.
- The licensee must immediately report a lost or stolen meter.

DMM P030, *Postage Meters and Meter Stamps*, contains the complete regulations governing the use of postage meters for postage payment.



*The mailer is responsible for correcting mailings with incorrect or "stale" meter dates. You must "re-meter" the piece with the correct date before acceptance!*



**DMM P030**

## PERMIT IMPRINT

The use of a permit imprint allows you to mail without affixing postage to each piece. The mailer obtains a permit, or authorization, to mail with a preprinted imprint (also called an indicia) indicating the postage payment on their pieces.

The Postal Service establishes an advance deposit permit imprint account in the mailer's name. This account is similar to a checking account. The mailer deposits the amount necessary to pay the postage prior to mailing. The postage statement that accompanies the mailing prompts a deduction from the account, similar to writing a check.

## Authorization And Fees

Mailers must submit Form 3615, *Mailing Permit Application and Customer Profile*, to the post office where they intend to mail, accompanied by a nonrefundable application fee. The Postal Service assigns the mailer a permit number and establishes an advance deposit account for the mailer using this number.

Mailers who wish to present discounted mailings must also pay the applicable annual mailing fee.

## Placement

The actual permit imprint indicia, often called the permit imprint, replaces the postage stamp. You may print your permit imprint directly on mailpieces or on labels permanently affixed to mailpieces. Mailers may also print it on mailpiece wrappers, envelopes, and containers.

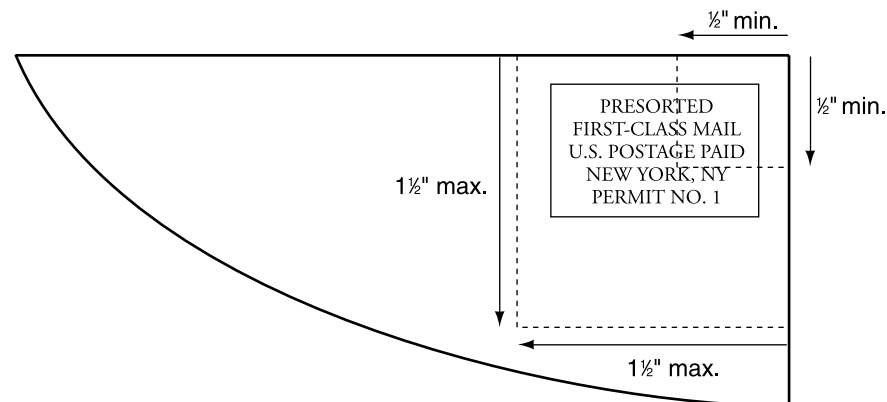
Mailers must place the permit imprint parallel to the address of the mailpiece, in the upper right corner of the address side, address area, or the address label. You may vary the position only to allow data processing equipment to simultaneously print the address, the imprint, and other required postal information.

## Clear Space

You must print the indicia wholly within a clear space no smaller than 1/2 inch by 1/2 inch. The entire area occupied by the indicia must be no larger than 1 1/2 inch below or to the left of the upper right corner of the mailpiece or the address area. Except as required to enclose the permit information, no printing may appear either above or to the right of the required text. The rule that forms a box around the indicia may be omitted.

The requirements are less strict when printing the indicia on an address label; simply ensure that the indicia is rectangular, and is sufficiently large and separated from the other information on the label to be legible.

## PERMIT IMPRINT PLACEMENT AND CLEAR AREA



## CONTENT AND FORMAT

You must produce permit imprints using a printing press, rubber stamp, mimeograph, or some other method of copying or reproduction. A permit imprint cannot be individually hand-drawn or typewritten onto each piece.

### Content

The content of the permit imprint indicia consists of a printed statement that indicates the mailer has paid the appropriate postage for the mailpiece. The text of the indicia also indicates the post office where the mailer holds the permit, along with the permit number.

There are several variations to the indicia formats shown on the next few pages. Additional samples are in DMM P040.

Regardless of the class of the mailpiece, the text of the permit imprint always includes these common elements:

- The statement: U.S. Postage Paid.
- City and state of the post office where the permit is held (and where the mail must be entered).
- The correct permit number.

### First-Class Mail

In addition to the common elements, permit imprints for First-Class and Priority Mail must also include either First-Class Mail or Priority Mail, as applicable.

#### FIRST-CLASS MAIL INDICIA

FIRST-CLASS MAIL  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
NEW YORK, NY  
PERMIT NO. 1

An indicia for First-Class Mail may also include the following *optional* elements:

- The ZIP Code of the permit holder.
- The mailing date.
- The amount of postage paid, or the number of ounces.
- Additional required rate markings.

You may substitute the wording "Mailed from ZIP Code," followed by the 5-digit ZIP Code for the mailing office for the city and state information.

For First-Class discounted mailings, the indicia usually includes the basic "Presorted" rate marking.

#### PRESORTED FIRST-CLASS MAIL INDICIA

PRESORTED  
FIRST-CLASS MAIL  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
NEW YORK, NY  
PERMIT NO. 1

#### PRESORTED FIRST-CLASS MAIL INDICIA WITH OPTIONAL 5-DIGIT ZIP CODE

PRESORTED  
FIRST-CLASS MAIL  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
PERMIT NO. 1  
ZIP CODE 10001

#### PRESORTED FIRST-CLASS MAIL INDICIA WITH OPTIONAL 5-DIGIT ZIP CODE AND PIECE WEIGHT

PRESORTED  
FIRST-CLASS MAIL  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID 1oz.  
NEW YORK, NY  
PERMIT NO. 1  
ZIP CODE 10001

**!** *Since the decision of what to include in the indicia is made in the design phase, you should determine the class of mail and discount category prior to this step.*



*Correct class and rate markings are an important acceptance issue. If you are unsure, check with your local postal personnel prior to printing!*

## Standard Mail

As with First-Class Mail, indicia for Standard Mail must include the required common elements. Although not required to be in the indicia itself, the class marking is usually included.

A Standard Mail indicia may also include the following elements:

- The ZIP Code of the permit holder.
- The amount of postage paid, or the number of ounces.
- Additional required rate markings.
- You may substitute the wording "Mailed from ZIP Code," followed by the 5-digit ZIP Code for the mailing office for the city and state information.

A permit imprint indicia for Standard Mail must not include a mailing date.

### STANDARD MAIL INDICIA

PRESORTED  
STANDARD  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
NEW YORK, NY  
PERMIT NO. 1

You may abbreviate "Presorted Standard" as PRSRT STD:

PRSRT STD  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
NEW YORK, NY  
PERMIT NO. 1

## NONPROFIT RATE STANDARD MAIL INDICIA

NONPROFIT  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
NEW YORK, NY  
PERMIT NO. 1

## Package Services

The basic required marking indicating the appropriate subclass (e.g., "Bound Printed Matter") may appear on the mailpiece as part of the indicia. Alternatively, mailers may print these markings directly below or to the left of the postage payment indication.

### PACKAGE SERVICES INDICIAS

LIBRARY MAIL  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
NEW YORK, NY  
PERMIT NO. 1

PARCEL POST  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
NEW YORK, NY  
PERMIT NO. 1

## Other Required Markings

You may include other required postal markings as part of the permit imprint indicia. Alternatively, you may print these additional markings directly below or to the left of the indicia.

### INDICIAS WITH OTHER REQUIRED MARKINGS

PRSRT STD  
ECRWSS  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
NEW YORK, NY  
PERMIT NO. 1

FIRST-CLASS MAIL  
AUTO CR  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
NEW YORK, NY  
PERMIT NO. 1

## RATE MARKING PRINTED TO THE LEFT OF THE INDICIA

ECRWSS

PRSRT STD  
ECRWSS  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
NEW YORK, NY  
PERMIT NO. 1

### Format

In addition to the appropriate contents, you must also adhere to these requirements when designing and printing permit imprint indicias:

- No extraneous printing may appear in the indicia.
- The text contained in the indicia must be at least 4 point type, except when printed on an address label.
- When printing the indicia directly on the mailpiece, no printing may appear above or to the right of the permit information except as required to enclose the indicia.
- When printing the indicia on an address label, no printing may appear above or to the right of the permit information except as required to enclose the indicia.
- When printing the indicia in the address area, no printing may appear above or to the right of the permit information except as required to enclose the indicia.

## COMPANY PERMIT IMPRINTS

Mailers may choose to replace the city, state, and permit number in an indicia with the exact name of the company holding the permit. This is called a company permit imprint.

When using a company permit imprint, the mailpiece must bear a complete domestic return address. The return address must be either:

- The physical location where the mailer keeps his records and files pertaining to this mailing.
- OR
- A point of contact from which the physical location of the records and files can be readily determined.

For each mailing made using a company permit imprint, the mailer must retain the following records:

- Complete sample mailpiece for each version.
- Postage statement indicating:
  - The weight of a single piece.
  - Total number of pieces mailed.
  - Total postage.
  - Dates of mailing.
  - Postage payment method.
  - Post office of mailing.

If the return address used on the mailpiece is not the actual physical location at which the USPS can review the mailer's records, or it is not a point of contact from which such a location can be readily determined, then the mailer must:

1. Include in the indicia the 5-Digit ZIP Code of the physical location where the records are kept or can be made available.
2. Provide the postmaster of that office with a sample of the mailpiece, the dates and post offices of mailing, and the name and local address of the party who has the required mailing records.



*A company permit imprint allows the mailer to enhance corporate recognition. It also allows mailers with a regional or national presence to mail from multiple field offices (with different permit numbers at different post offices) using the same envelope stock.*



*The Postal Service verifies the total pieces in a permit imprint mailing by dividing the total net weight by the piece weight, hence the requirement that all pieces be identical in weight.*

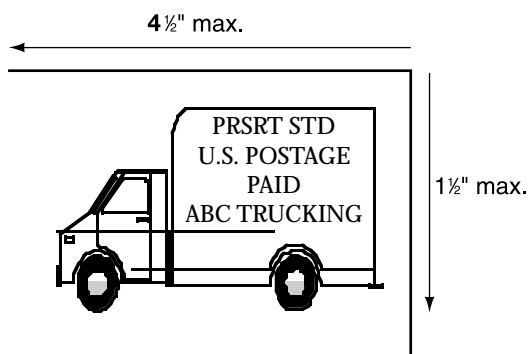
## COMPANY PERMIT IMPRINT

PRSRT STD  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
ABC TRUCKING

## DECORATIVE DESIGNS

Mailers may now incorporate decorative designs into their permit imprints. Except to enclose the permit information, these designs must appear *below* or to the *left* of the permit information. These designs (not the imprint information) may extend no farther than 4 1/2 inches to the left of the right edge, and 1 1/2 inches below the top edge of the mailpiece, address area, or address label, as applicable.

## DECORATIVE COMPANY PERMIT IMPRINT



## REFERENCES TO EXPEDITED HANDLING

If a mailer uses teaser copy on their presorted Standard Mail mailpieces that makes reference to expedited handling or delivery (e.g., "Priority," "Express," "Overnight"), then the mailer must:

- Show the words "Presorted Standard" or "Nonprofit Organization" more prominently than other words in the indicia.
- Include a clear space of at least 3/8 inch around the entire indicia.

## EXAMPLE:

PRSRT STD  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
NEW YORK, NY  
PERMIT NO. 1

This standard does not apply to postcard-size mail or when printing permit imprint indicia on address labels.

## Return Address

A return address is only required for permit imprint mailings using a company permit imprint.

## Deposit And Acceptance

Permit imprint mailings must consist of at least 200 pieces or 50 pounds of mail. Certain classes of mail and discounted rates may require higher minimums. Consult the Quick Service Guides or your local post office for more information.

All pieces in a permit imprint mailing must be identical in weight. Mailers preparing discounted mailings must pay the appropriate annual fee. You must prepare these mailings according to the standards for the class of mail and the rate claimed.

Mailers must deposit permit imprint mailings at the post office where they hold their permit, at a time and place designated by the postmaster. All permit imprint mailings must be tendered to postal acceptance personnel accompanied by the appropriate postage statement. You must never deposit permit imprint mailings in collection boxes, under any circumstances.

## MANIFEST MAILING SYSTEM

There are many mailers who would like to enjoy the benefits of using permit imprints, but have mailpieces that are nonidentical in weight. For these mailers the Postal Service created the Manifest Mailing System (MMS).

Manifesting allows the mailer to submit nonidentical weight pieces for acceptance, using permit imprints as the postage payment method. Postal verification is possible using unique identification numbers, combined with a printout listing weight and postage for each piece in the mailing. For more information, contact your postal representative and ask for Publication 401, *Guide to the Manifest Mailing System*.

## RESTRICTIONS

Do not intentionally design permit imprints to resemble postage stamps, meter impressions, or any other type of postage payment method. In addition, restrict the printing of permit imprints only to items that you intend to mail. Permit imprints must not appear on items that have not had postage paid with the USPS.

Payment must be on deposit for each mailing prior to its acceptance. Deposit these funds into your permit imprint account as directed by the USPS. The Postal Service does not allow credit for postage.

To maintain your authorization, you must use your permit imprint account for mailing at least once every 2 years. If you do not, the Postal Service must cancel your account. The Postal Service may also revoke a permit imprint for use in an unlawful scheme, or for failure to comply with relevant standards.

The complete regulations pertaining to the use of permit imprints as postage payment are contained in DMM P040.



**DMM P040**



## POSTAGE PAYMENT SUMMARY

The following chart summarizes the postage payment options available to each class of mail.

### POSTAGE PAYMENT OPTIONS BY CLASS OF MAIL

POSTAGE PAYMENT METHODS	CLASS OF MAIL				
	EXPRESS MAIL	PRIORITY MAIL	FIRST- CLASS	STANDARD MAIL	PERIODICALS
METER STAMPS	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO
PRE- CANCELED STAMPS	YES*	YES*	YES*	YES*	NO
PERMIT IMPRINT	NO	YES	YES	YES	NO
EXPRESS MAIL CORP. ACCOUNT	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO
ID STATEMENT	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES

\* Precanceled Stamps may not be used on boxes, cases, bags, or other reusable containers.

## ELECTRONIC OPTIONS

The Postal Service is constantly developing new products to meet its customers' needs. Postage payment methods are no exception.

The Postal Service is experimenting with various types of electronic postage. Unfortunately, it is beyond the scope of this course to cover the electronic options currently under development. For the latest information, visit the USPS's web site at [www.usps.com](http://www.usps.com).

**EXERCISE 8 - 1**

Directions: Circle the best response or fill in the blank to answer the following questions. Check your answers when you have completed the exercise.

1. To use a postage meter, you must first purchase one from the USPS.  
a) true                                      b) false
2. Meter stamps printed on adhesive meter strips must include, at a minimum:  
a) the day, month, and year  
b) the year  
c) the day and month  
d) the month and year
3. A permit imprint must be placed in the upper \_\_\_\_\_ corner of the address side or area, \_\_\_\_\_ to the delivery address.
4. Which of the following devices is unacceptable for reproducing a permit imprint indicia on a mailpiece?  
a) a rubber stamp  
b) a typewriter  
c) a mimeograph  
d) a printing press
5. Except when printed on an address label, the text contained in a permit imprint indicia must be printed in at least \_\_\_\_\_ point type.  
a) 12  
b) 8  
c) 4
6. Which of the following postage payment methods always requires a return address on the mailpiece?  
a) permit imprint  
b) precanceled stamps  
c) meter stamps
7. Except when using an approved Manifest Mailing System (MMS), all pieces in a permit imprint mailing must be:  
a) identical in weight  
b) either flat- or letter-sized  
c) a circular or flyer

### ANSWERS TO EXERCISE 8 - 1

1. **b, false**; postage meters are not purchased from the USPS, they are leased from an authorized vendor. The USPS sets or fills the meter with postage.
2. **d, the month and year**; this prevents the removal and later reuse of the meter strip.
3. **right, parallel**; this is the general standard for placement of a permit imprint.
4. **b, a typewriter**; permit imprints may not be typewritten or handwritten. A handwritten or typewritten design, however, can be reproduced by an authorized method.
5. **c, 4**; this standard ensures a minimum level of legibility of the permit imprint information, such as class of mail.
6. **b, precanceled stamps**; this is the only postage payment option that does not normally provide an alternative method of determining the sender.
7. **a, identical in weight**; this is due to the fact that, without an on-piece postage payment (such as a stamp), the USPS must verify a total piece count by weight prior to acceptance.

**A**s a mailer, you want to provide current and potential customers with an easy and inexpensive way to do business with you by mail. Reply mail service enables you to enclose convenient, preprinted reply pieces in outgoing mail to customers for return by domestic mail.

Reply mail, whether it is prepaid with stamps or whether postage is collected as it is delivered to you, is a cost-effective and convenient feedback system to market products and services or to obtain payment for them. There are two basic types of reply mail:

- Business Reply Mail (BRM).
- Courtesy Reply Mail (CRM).

When designing your BRM and CRM pieces, you want to ensure that the addresses, the overall formats, the physical characteristics, and the facing identification marks (FIMs) are compatible with postal automated processing equipment. Producing reply pieces that meet postal automation standards ensures that you get the most efficient processing possible for your reply pieces and prompt, accurate delivery.



## WHAT YOU WILL LEARN ABOUT REPLY AND RETURN MAIL

Upon completion of this module, you should be able to do the following:

- Define **business reply mail (BRM)** and **courtesy reply mail (CRM)** and describe the methods of preparing First-Class Mail reply pieces for return by customers.
- Describe the format and design requirements for **BRM** and **CRM** pieces, including dimensions, print size, addressing, facing identification marks (FIMs), and clear zones.
- Describe the format and design requirements for reply pieces to qualify for qualified business reply mail (QBRM) discounts.
- Define meter reply mail (MRM).
- Define and describe merchandise return service (MRS).

### BUSINESS REPLY MAIL

Business reply mail (BRM) is a service that allows a mailer to distribute preprinted First-Class Mail reply pieces to customers. The mailer, not the customer, pays the return postage.

The mailer does not prepay postage on BRM pieces. The Postal Service collects postage only on pieces that the customers actually send back to the mailer. This allows mailers to save postage costs on large volumes of distributed reply pieces. Business reply mail can significantly boost response rates for mailing campaigns, particularly the return of surveys and questionnaires.

The Postal Service collects single-piece, First-Class postage, plus a per piece charge, from the BRM permit holder (or authorized representative). A lower First-Class Mail postage rate and per piece charge applies to qualified business reply mail (QBRM) pieces. A BRM permit holder has three options for paying postage and fees on returned pieces:

1. Cash (or check) payment upon delivery.
2. Automatic deduction from a postage due account prior to delivery.
3. Automatic deduction from an advance deposit account.

Authorized BRM permit holders may distribute BRM cards, envelopes, self-mailers, or cartons. Permit holders may also distribute business reply mail labels. Customers can affix these labels to items being returned.

### AUTHORIZATION AND FEES

The Postal Service requires an annual fee to set up and *maintain* a business reply mail permit. To apply, mailers must submit Form 3615, *Mailing Permit Application and Customer Profile*, to the issuing post office. Establishing a business reply mail advance deposit account requires payment of an additional fee.

Paying an annual accounting fee reduces the per piece charge. An annual accounting fee provides a separate accounting for BRM charges.

The BRM permit holder guarantees to pay postage and fees upon delivery of all returned BRM pieces. Mailers must pay the appropriate charges for pieces they receive. Refusal to accept and pay the required charges is grounds for revocation of a permit holder's BRM permit.

### POSTAL GUIDANCE

Contact your local mailing requirements office, postmaster, or postal representative for more information. They will help you analyze your options and can provide additional information, such as how to receive BRM at multiple post offices using the same permit.

You should consult your local mailpiece design analyst for guidance in designing BRM pieces and for publications about business reply mail.

### BRM FORMAT

All forms of printing are acceptable if sufficiently legible. You may not use handwriting to prepare the address side of BRM. Typewriting



*Business reply mail can significantly boost response rates for mailing campaigns, particularly the return of surveys and questionnaires.*

and hand-stamping are acceptable only on penalty BRM used by government agencies.

All ink colors are acceptable if there is a 40 percent print contrast ratio between the ink in the address and the paper, in both the red and the green spectrums.

We recommend that mailers obtain approval from their local postmaster or mailpiece design analyst (MDA) prior to printing. Mailpiece design analysts can review mechanicals or bluelines for this purpose. The complete requirements for BRM use and formatting are in DMM S922.

holder is responsible for correcting any format errors. Repeated violations can result in revocation of the mailer's BRM permit.

### **"No Postage Necessary" Endorsement**

You must print the endorsement "NO POSTAGE NECESSARY IF MAILED IN THE UNITED STATES" in the upper right corner of the address side of the BRM piece. The left edge of the endorsement must be no more than 1 3/4 inches from the right edge of the piece.

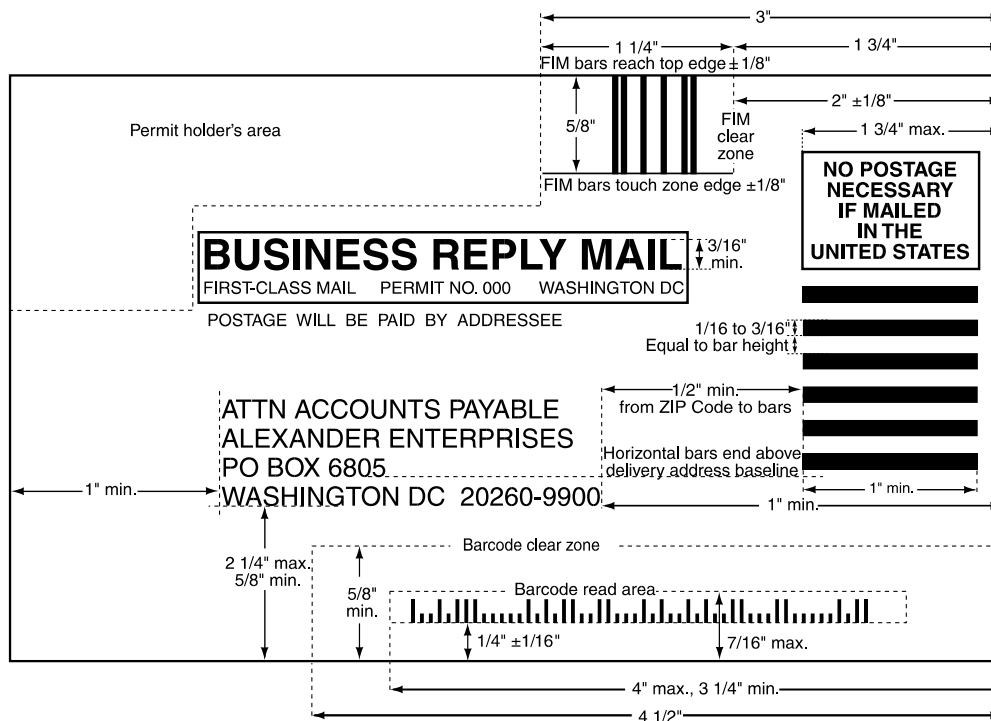
## **BUSINESS REPLY MAIL FORMAT**

### **REQUIRED ELEMENTS FOR ALL BUSINESS REPLY MAIL**

The following format elements must appear correctly on each BRM piece. The permit

### **"BUSINESS REPLY MAIL" Legend**

The correct business reply mail legend must appear above the permit holder's address in capital letters. Each letter in the legend must



be at least 3/16 inch high. Use the two legends as follows:

- Use "BUSINESS REPLY MAIL" on all BRM except business reply labels. This includes all preprinted BRM envelopes, cards, self-mailers, and cartons.
- Use the legend "BUSINESS REPLY LABEL" only for BRM labels applied to matter being returned.

Pieces printed with the legend "BUSINESS REPLY MAIL," including envelopes and cards, may not be used as BRM labels.

### Permit Number

When designing a business reply mail piece, be sure to confirm your BRM permit number prior to printing! It is easy for you or your client to confuse this number with other USPS permit numbers.

Immediately below the BRM legend, the words "FIRST-CLASS MAIL PERMIT NO." (followed by your permit number) and the name of the issuing post office (city and state) must appear in capital letters. The post office assigns a BRM permit number when it accepts and processes your Form 3615 and annual fee.

### "POSTAGE WILL BE PAID BY ADDRESSEE" ENDORSEMENT

You must print the endorsement "Postage Will Be Paid By Addressee" below "FIRST-CLASS MAIL PERMIT NO. CITY/STATE." This is the permit holders' statement of responsibility for all postage charges.

### BRM Delivery Address

You must print the permit holder's complete delivery address, including the name, directly on the mailpiece. Alternatively, the address

may appear on an insert through a window in a window envelope. For qualified business reply mail (QBRM) pieces, the address must include the unique ZIP+4 Code provided by the Postal Service. We will cover QBRM in more detail later in the module.

Other BRM addressing standards include the following:

- The bottom line of the address must be no lower than 5/8 inch from the bottom edge. It can be no higher than 2 1/4 inch.
- Maintain at least 1/2 inch between the address and the edge of the piece.
- Maintain at least 1/2 inch between the ZIP Code and the horizontal bars.
- You may add a company logo to the address area so long as it is no lower than the top of the delivery (street or PO box) address line. On barcoded BRM, the logo can be as low as 5/8 inch from the bottom edge of the mailpiece.

### Horizontal Bars

Horizontal bars allow the Postal Service to easily separate BRM from other mail in the system. This helps to ensure payment. You must print a series of horizontal bars parallel to the length of the piece, directly below the "No Postage Necessary..." endorsement. Postal Service optical character readers are programmed to recognize mailpieces with a minimum of 4 horizontal bars as business reply mail.

The bars must be the same size, at least 1 inch long, and 1/16 inch to 3/16 inch in thickness. Evenly space the vertical column of bars and do not extend them below the delivery address (street or PO box #) line.

### Facing Identification Mark

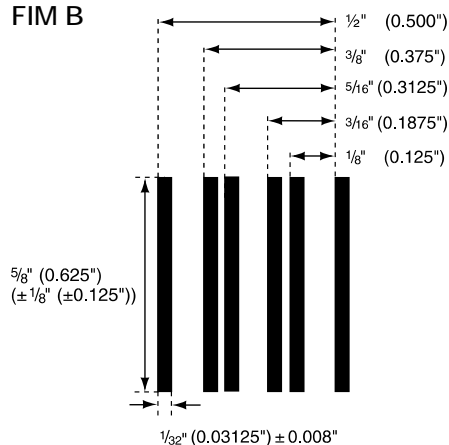
The facing identification mark (FIM) serves as an identification device for postal automated

equipment. FIMs are not required on flat-size mail or parcels.

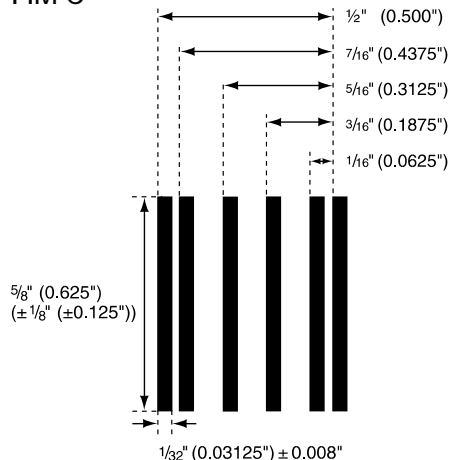
The FIM is a series of six vertical bars printed on the top right of all letter-size (including cards) BRM pieces. The Postal Service requires two different FIM patterns on BRM as follows:

1. **FIM B** is for BRM without a barcode. The Postal Service strongly recommends however, barcoding all letter-size reply mail whenever possible.
2. **FIM C** is required for all letter-size BRM printed with a barcode. FIM C allows postal equipment to send BRM pieces with a barcode directly to a barcode sorter.

**FIM B**



**FIM C**



Each FIM bar must be  $\frac{5}{8}$  inch ( $\pm \frac{1}{8}$  inch) high and  $\frac{1}{32}$  inch wide ( $\pm 0.008$  inch). BRM is nonmailable if the FIM has insufficient ink coverage, improper specifications, or ink in the space between bars or when the camera-ready copy of the FIM is mistakenly enlarged or reduced.

Printers must limit the total skew to  $\pm 5$  degrees from a FIM perfectly perpendicular to the top edge of the piece. At least a 30 percent print reflectance difference (PRD) in the red and green spectrum must exist between the paper and the ink used for printing. Ink containing at least one part black printed on white or lightly colored paper normally meets this specification.

The USPS's mailpiece design analyst can verify these and other design standards. Please use this resource to provide feedback during the critical design phase. The MDA can also supply camera ready artwork for FIM C.

### Location

The right edge of the rightmost (last) bar must be 2 inches ( $\pm \frac{1}{8}$  inch) from the right edge of the mailpiece. The tops of the FIM bars must be within  $\frac{1}{8}$  inch of the top edge of the mailpiece. The tops of the bars may extend onto the back (flap) of the piece if the minimum  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch bar height is maintained on the face of the piece.

DMM C100.5 contains the regulations governing construction and placement of the facing identification mark (FIM).

### MAILPIECE CHARACTERISTICS

The paper used for all envelopes must have a minimum basis weight of 20 pounds (using 500 17-by 22-inch sheets). The USPS must preapprove any designs for nonpaper envelopes.

BRM pieces must meet the reflectance requirements for automation-compatible upgradable mailpieces:

- The material used for your BRM piece must produce a minimum background reflectance of 50 percent in the red and 45 percent in the green spectrum.



- Any dark fibers or background patterns must not produce a PCR measurement greater than 15 percent.
- The envelope material must not have a red fluorescence exceeding 4.0 phosphor meter units (because of the sensors on USPS cancellation equipment).

## Window Envelopes

You may use inserts in BRM window envelopes to vary the receipt site and permit holder. The endorsement "No Postage Necessary If Mailed In The United States," the horizontal bars, the FIM, and the legend "BUSINESS REPLY MAIL" must be printed directly on the envelope.

You may print any of the other required elements, "FIRST-CLASS MAIL PERMIT NO. CITY, STATE," "Postage Will Be Paid By Addressee," and the permit holder's name and delivery address, either on the enclosure or directly on the envelope. You may also add the appropriate address block to the insert.

## BRM Self-Mailers

Self-mailers must be at least 0.007 inch and not more than 1/4 inch in thickness. They must meet the seal/fold/tab design requirements for automation-compatible self-mailers (see module six, *Automation Requirements*). Self-mailers must also include user instructions to ensure that the self-mailer will meet the applicable sealing and folding requirements on the return.

Any BRM piece is nonmailable if sealed with wax, clasps, string, staples, or buttons. BRM is also nonmailable if the edges are not straight, or if the piece is not rectangular.

## BRM Cards

A BRM card must meet the design standards for First-Class Mail postcards. Any pieces larger than the maximum dimensions for postcards must be .009" thick and are charged the applicable First-Class letter rate.

## BRM Labels

For other than letter-size pieces, the minimum size of a BRM label is 2 inches high by 3 inches long (remember; length is the dimension parallel to the delivery address as read, height is the opposite, perpendicular dimension). You must meet all basic BRM format standards, except that you may omit the FIM.

The Postal Service will charge mailpieces in excess of 13 ounces at the appropriate Priority Mail rates. For zone-rated Priority Mail, if the Postal Service cannot determine the zone from the cancellation or the sender's address, the piece is rated zone 4.

While seldom used, you may also design BRM labels to apply to letter-size envelopes. Additional standards apply for this application. Consult the *Domestic Mail Manual* and your local mailpiece design analyst for further guidance.

## PREBARCODED BRM

Prebarcoding of BRM is optional except for letter-size BRM enclosed in automation rate discounted mailings. The USPS however, strongly recommends the use of BRM with preprinted barcodes. Mailers who follow this advice reap the full benefits of float reduction and fast response times offered by postal automation.

A barcode on your BRM piece reduces postal handling and improves the delivery of your mail. In addition, properly prepared prebarcoded letter-size BRM may qualify for lower per piece charges as QBRM.

A barcode preprinted on a BRM mailpiece must be one assigned by the Postal Service exclusively for BRM. The mailpiece design analyst can inform you of the appropriate ZIP+4 Code and provide camera ready artwork for both the barcode and the correct FIM C.

### General Format Standards:

Prebarcoded BRM must bear all the required format elements previously covered. You must also maintain the barcoding specifications outlined in module five, *USPS Barcodes*. The following is a summary of the additional requirements for prebarcoded BRM:

- Prepare envelopes sealed on all four edges from paper with a minimum basis weight of 20 pounds (as measured by 500 17 by 22 inch sheets).
- You must use FIM C.
- Use only the ZIP+4 and corresponding barcode assigned by the USPS for that particular mailpiece. The USPS does not permit delivery point barcodes on BRM.
- The ink used to print the FIM and barcode must generate a minimum 30 percent PRD when measured against the background paper.
- Print the barcode either:

1. In the barcode clear zone in the lower right of the mailpiece.

OR

2. In the address block location only if printed on an insert intended to show through a window on a window envelope.

All BRM pieces measuring over 4 1/2 inch high by 6 inch long must be at least 0.009 inch thick.

## QUALIFIED BUSINESS REPLY MAIL

For QBRM, the mailer must use the unique ZIP+4 Code assigned to them by the Postal Service for use with BRM. The mailer must represent this unique ZIP+4 Code by a ZIP+4 barcode printed on the mailpiece.

The ZIP+4 Code assigned by the Postal Service is unique for that category of letter-size BRM. The ZIP+4 barcode provides for sortation on postal automated equipment by specific size and rate categories (i.e., cards, 1 oz. letters or 2 oz. letters).

In return for following the relevant standards, the mailer receives a discount not only on their per piece charge, but also in actual First-Class Mail postage rates. This is possible because of the efficiency of the Postal Service's high-speed barcode sorters. For a complete listing of postage rates and fees for regular BRM and QBRM, see the DMM R900.



**DMM R900.2**

## AUTHORIZATIONS AND FEES

To participate in QBRM, you must complete Form 6805, *QBRM Application and Approval*. Contact your postmaster, mailpiece design analyst, or business mail entry personnel for more information.

The BRM format standards are more stringent under QBRM. A written authorization is necessary before acceptance into the program. In addition to meeting the requirements for prebarcoded BRM, the permit holder must also:

- Pay an annual accounting fee.
- Meet all the design requirements for automation-compatible mailpieces, including the aspect ratio.
- Request a unique ZIP+4 and corresponding barcode for each category of letter-size BRM.
- Submit more preproduction samples for review with the completed application.

## RESTRICTIONS

You may not send domestic BRM to foreign countries. The standards for International Business Reply Service (IBRS) are in the *International Mail Manual* (IMM).

You may not use BRM for any purpose other than as a reply piece, even if affixing postage. Mailers may not combine special services (e.g., certified, insured, return receipt) with BRM.

No one may alter the address on a BRM piece other than the permit holder. You may use a printed label for this purpose, but the permit holder's name must still appear printed directly on the mailpiece. A new address label cannot cover the permit holder's name. This protects the permit holder's BRM permit from unauthorized use.

The Postal Service does not allow printed borders on BRM letters or cards. Printed borders may appear on business reply labels and envelopes exceeding any of the letter-size maximums.

If the Postal Service cannot identify the sender, it treats as waste all BRM envelopes or cards improperly used as BRM labels on nonmailable items. If a customer misuses a BRM card or envelope by attaching it to a parcel, the Postal Service treats the piece as undeliverable mail.

All letter-size BRM pieces enclosed in prebarcoded First-Class, Periodicals, and Standard Mail mailpieces must bear the correct FIM and barcode, and meet all the requirements for BRM.

## DEPOSIT AND ACCEPTANCE

You may send BRM pieces to your customers inside other mailpieces. Mailers must correctly barcode letter-size BRM pieces in automation rate discounted mailings. You may also use any other legal means to distribute BRM. This includes fliers, take-ones, leave-behinds, and private carriers to distribute BRM.

Recipients may tender BRM to the Postal Service by any method appropriate for First-Class Mail. This includes deposit in collection boxes.

## SUMMARY

BRM allows customers to send replies and orders to your company without affixing postage. You pay only for the pieces returned, not the total distributed.

To use BRM, you must apply for a BRM permit and choose a level of service appropriate to your needs and budget.

All BRM pieces, cards, letters, flats, and parcels, are returned to you as First-Class Mail. The Postal Service collects the appropriate postage and per piece charges either prior to or upon delivery, depending on the options you select.

**EXERCISE 9 - 1**

Directions: Circle the best response or fill in the blank to answer the following questions. Check your answers when you have completed the exercise.

1. BRM pieces are prepaid.
  - a) true
  - b) false
2. Which endorsement must be printed in the upper right corner of the address side of a BRM mailpiece?
  - a) "BUSINESS REPLY MAIL"
  - b) "POSTAGE WILL BE PAID BY ADDRESSEE"
  - c) "FIRST-CLASS MAIL PERMIT NO. (##), (CITY/STATE)"
  - d) "NO POSTAGE NECESSARY IF MAILED IN THE UNITED STATES"
3. The characters used to print the legend "BUSINESS REPLY MAIL" on a BRM piece must be:
  - a) at least 3/16 inch high
  - b) in all capital letters
  - c) in at least 12 point type
4. Which of the following endorsements must appear below the "FIRST-CLASS MAIL PERMIT NO. (##), (CITY/STATE)" on a BRM mailpiece?
  - a) "BUSINESS REPLY MAIL"
  - b) "POSTAGE WILL BE PAID BY ADDRESSEE"
  - c) "NO POSTAGE NECESSARY IF MAILED IN THE UNITED STATES"
  - d) none of the above
5. FIM stands for \_\_\_\_\_ Identification \_\_\_\_\_ .
6. Which FIM is required to be printed on prebarcoded BRM?
  - a) FIM A
  - b) FIM B
  - c) FIM C
7. QBRM requires the assignment of a \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP+4 Code by the USPS prior to printing the barcode on the mailpiece.

### ANSWERS TO EXERCISE 9 - 1

1. **b, false;** BRM pieces are not prepaid. Payment for returned BRM pieces is due prior to delivery to the BRM permit holder.
2. **d, "NO POSTAGE NECESSARY IF MAILED IN THE UNITED STATES";** this is a required element.
3. **a, at least 3/16 inch high;** this requirement helps ensure ready identification of BRM pieces in the mailstream.
4. **b, "POSTAGE WILL BE PAID BY ADDRESSEE";** this is a required element.
5. **Facing, Mark;** the appropriate FIM is required on all letter-size BRM.
6. **c, FIM C;** identifies prebarcoded BRM.
7. **unique;** for qualifying QBRM, a unique ZIP+4 Code must be assigned for each weight increment and type of letter-size BRM piece.

## COURTESY REPLY MAIL

Courtesy Reply Mail (CRM) is a term used to describe preprinted and addressed return envelopes. Companies supply these envelopes to their recipients for return use. The most common example of courtesy reply mail is an envelope included in a utility bill for sending payments back to the company. Nearly all utilities and many other businesses who bill and fulfill via the mails supply CRM envelopes to their customers.

Companies usually distribute CRM envelopes without a postage stamp affixed. The recipient must place a postage stamp on the envelope before mailing it back. Individual customers pay postage with adhesive stamps or meter stamps.


## AUTHORIZATION AND FEES

The USPS requires no fees or prior authorization to distribute CRM.

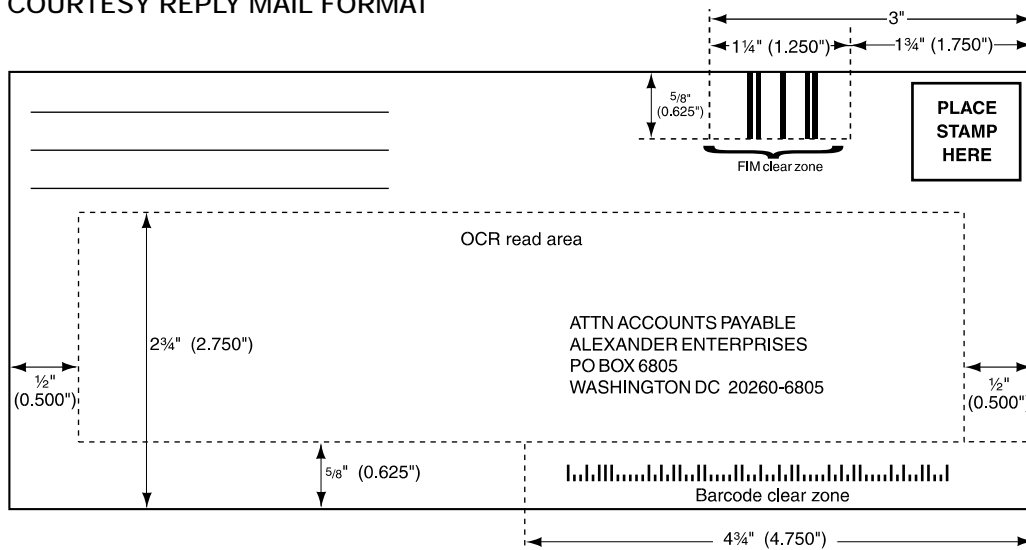
## CRM FORMAT

The purpose of CRM is to move the piece through the system using high-speed automation equipment. This ensures that you receive the piece from the customer as soon as possible.

Although there are no DMM design standards for CRM, you should follow the requirements for automated processing. Reply envelopes often contain a monetary payment. A properly designed CRM envelope ensures expeditious and accurate delivery—a true bottom line feature.

 The convenience of a handy reply envelope also encourages a faster response and boosts total response rates.

## COURTESY REPLY MAIL FORMAT



✓ CRM is also subject to the First-Class Mail nonstandard surcharge if outside the acceptable aspect ratio and under 1 ounce in weight.

## Common Elements

The elements common to all types of CRM are:

- **Delivery Address**—A properly formatted preprinted address to which the recipient is returning the piece.
- **Postage Reminder**—A simple “Place Stamp Here” style of reminder printed in the upper right corner of the piece.
- **Return Address Area**—Typically a set of parallel lines in the upper left for the recipient’s name and address.

The placement, envelope construction, and address printing guidelines for CRM are the same as those for automation-compatible mail.

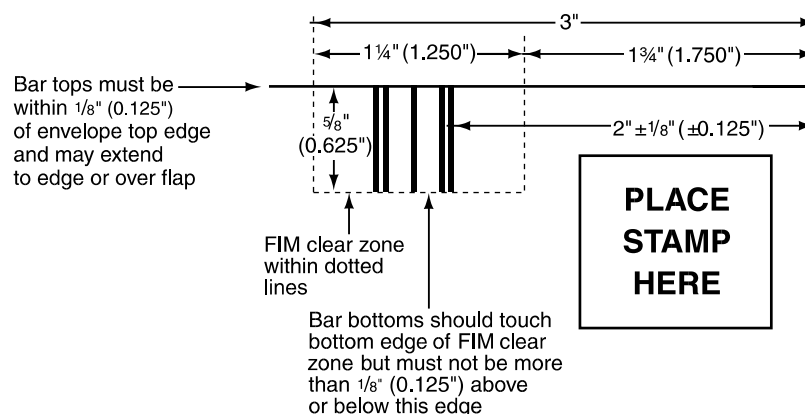
## PREBARCODED CRM

CRM that is prebarcoded enjoys the maximum benefits of postal automated sortation. The Postal Service encourages all mailers who distribute letter-size CRM to prebarcode their reply pieces.

## Barcode Content and Placement

Prebarcoded CRM may bear either a delivery point barcode, or if the business has an exclusively assigned ZIP+4 Code, a Firm Unique ZIP+4 barcode. You may position the barcode either in the address block, or in the lower right corner in the barcode clear zone. In either case, maintain the positioning, clearance, and printing standards covered earlier in module five, *USPS Barcodes*, and module six, *Automation Requirements*.

## FIM POSITIONING REQUIREMENTS



## FIM A

All prebarcoded CRM envelopes should bear a facing identification mark (FIM) A. The FIM A identifies the mailpiece to postal cancellation and automated equipment as prebarcoded CRM. This allows the piece to be sent directly to dedicated high-speed barcode sorters.

Although the bar pattern is different, the printing and positioning requirements for a FIM A on courtesy reply mail is the same as for BRM.

## POSTAL GUIDANCE

Your local mailpiece design analyst can verify your correct ZIP+4 Code and provide camera-ready artwork for both the barcode and the correct FIM A. The MDA will also provide feedback and guidance on positioning requirements during the design stage.

## RESTRICTIONS

CRM is subject to the same limitations and standards as all mailable matter. Other than these basic standards no additional standards apply.

All letter-size CRM pieces enclosed in prebarcoded First-Class, Periodicals, and Standard Mail mailpieces must bear the correct FIM and barcode, and meet all the requirements for CRM.

## DEPOSIT AND ACCEPTANCE

You may send CRM pieces to your customers inside other mailpieces. You may also use any other legal means of distribution for CRM. Most commonly, recipients deposit CRM envelopes in postal collection boxes or leave them for pickup by their letter carrier.

## METER REPLY MAIL

Meter reply mail is essentially CRM with a meter stamp preapplied as return postage. Print a meter stamp (see module eight, *Postage Payment Methods*) from a postage meter directly on a mailpiece or address label that bears the return address of the meter holder. Meter stamps may prepay return postage for:

- Express Mail.
- Unzoned Priority Mail (when the rate is the same for all zones, currently up to 5 pounds).
- First-Class postcards, letters, and flats up to a maximum of 13 ounces.
- Single-piece rate Media Mail and Library Mail.

You must use a meter stamped address label for Priority Mail, single-piece Media Mail, and Library Mail. When using a label, ensure that it is affixed so that it cannot be removed in one piece. This prevents reuse of postage.

## AUTHORIZATION AND FEES

Other than the costs associated with leasing a postage meter and obtaining a meter license, the USPS requires no fees or prior authorization to distribute meter reply mail.

## METER REPLY FORMAT

All forms of printing are acceptable if sufficiently legible. You may not use handwriting, typewriting, or hand-stamping to prepare the address side of metered reply mail.

### Required Elements

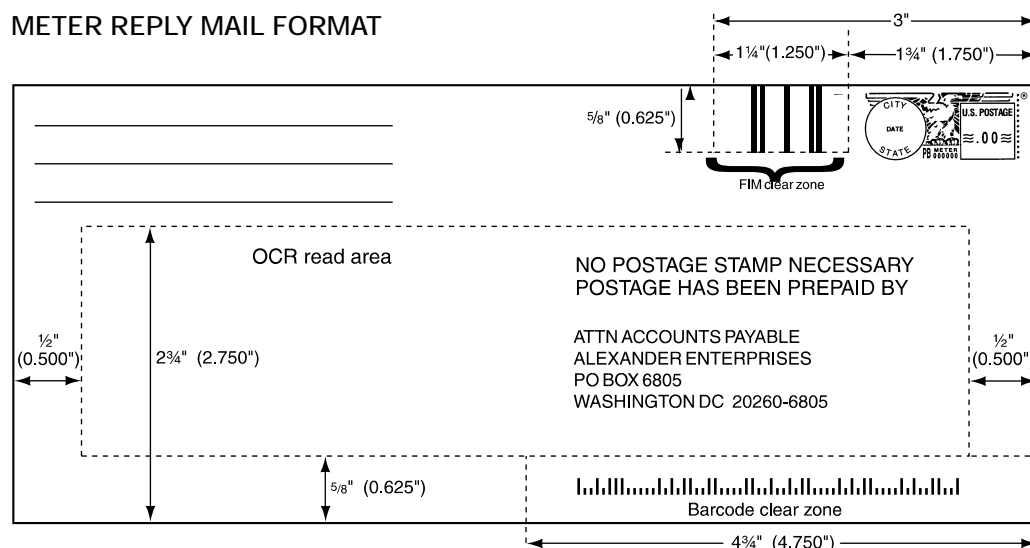
The phrase "NO POSTAGE STAMP NECESSARY, POSTAGE HAS BEEN PREPAID BY" must appear on the piece directly above the delivery address of the meter license holder. The preprinted address side must appear as shown below. The USPS permits no additions or alterations to this format.

The meter stamp amount must be enough to prepay the postage in full. This must be at the next higher whole cent if using a fractional meter (a meter capable of printing in fractions of a cent). Because the date of deposit by the recipient for return is unknown, the meter stamp must not have a date.

## PREBARCODED METER REPLY MAIL

Meter reply mail that is prebarcoded enjoys the full benefits of postal automated sortation. As with courtesy reply mail, the Postal Service encourages all mailers who distribute letter-size meter reply mail to prebarcode their reply pieces.

## METER REPLY MAIL FORMAT







You would typically use meter reply mail as a response vehicle when a reply is more or less assured. If not, consider a BRM permit. Based on anticipated volume, the required BRM fees can often be recouped fairly quickly.

## BARCODE CONTENT AND PLACEMENT

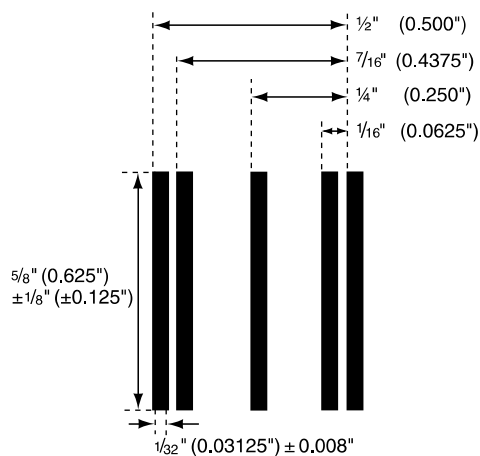
Prebarcoded meter reply mail (MRM) may bear either a delivery point barcode, or if the business has an exclusively assigned ZIP+4 Code, a Firm Unique ZIP+4 barcode. You may position the barcode either in the address block, or in the lower right corner in the barcode clear zone. In either case, maintain the positioning, clearance, and printing standards covered earlier in module five, *USPS Barcodes*, and module six, *Automation Requirements*.

### FIM A

All prebarcoded meter reply envelopes should bear a facing identification mark (FIM) A. The FIM A identifies the mailpiece to postal cancellation and automated equipment as prebarcoded reply mail. This allows the piece to be sent directly to dedicated high-speed barcode sorters.

The printing and positioning requirements for a FIM A on meter reply mail is the same as for CRM and BRM.

### FIM A



## RESTRICTIONS

The Postal Service delivers meter reply mail only to the address of the meter license holder. If the address is altered, the mail is held for proper postage from the addressee prior to receipt.

All letter-size MRM pieces enclosed in prebarcoded First-Class, Periodicals and Standard Mail mailpieces must bear the correct FIM and barcode, and meet all the requirements for MRM.

## DEPOSIT AND ACCEPTANCE

You may send meter reply pieces to your customers inside other mailpieces. You may also use any other legal means of distribution. Most commonly, recipients deposit MRM envelopes in postal collection boxes or leave them for pickup by their letter carrier.

## POSTAL GUIDANCE

Your local mailpiece design analyst can verify your correct ZIP+4 Code and provide camera-ready artwork for both the barcode and the correct FIM A. The MDA will also provide feedback and guidance on positioning requirements during the design stage.

**EXERCISE 9 - 2**

Directions: Circle the best response or fill in the blank to answer the following questions. Check your answers when you have completed the exercise.

1. Courtesy Reply Mail (CRM) is returned postage due to the original sender.
  - a) true
  - b) false
2. Which FIM is used on prebarcoded CRM pieces?
  - a) FIM A
  - b) FIM B
  - c) FIM C
  - d) FIM D
3. An MDA can provide camera-ready artwork for the correct FIM, barcode, delivery address, return address, and "Place Stamp Here" box for courtesy reply mail.
  - a) true
  - b) false
4. All reply pieces included in mailings sent at the automated (prebarcoded) rates must bear the correct FIM and barcode.
  - a) true
  - b) false
5. The postage costs for meter reply mail are prepaid by the original sender.
  - a) true
  - b) false
6. On a meter reply piece, directly above the delivery address of the original sender, the following endorsement must appear:
  - a) "NO POSTAGE NECESSARY IF MAILED IN THE UNITED STATES"
  - b) "POSTAGE WILL BE PAID BY ADDRESSEE"
  - c) "NO POSTAGE STAMP NECESSARY, POSTAGE HAS BEEN PREPAID BY"
  - d) none of the above
7. Prebarcoded meter reply mail can bear either a \_\_\_\_\_ point barcode or a \_\_\_\_\_ unique ZIP+4 barcode.

### ANSWERS TO EXERCISE 9 - 2

1. **b, false**; postage is typically applied by the recipient prior to the return of the piece. The original sender may preapply the postage, if desired. When a meter stamp is preapplied to a CRM piece, the piece becomes meter reply mail.
2. **a, FIM A**; identifies prebarcoded CRM.
3. **b, false**; an MDA can supply camera-ready artwork for the correct FIM and barcode only.
4. **a, true**; this is a requirement for automated rates.
5. **a, true**; the original sender preapplies postage in the form of a meter stamp.
6. **c, "NO POSTAGE STAMP NECESSARY, POSTAGE HAS BEEN PREPAID BY"**; this is a required element.
7. **delivery, firm**; either type of barcode may be used. ZIP+4 barcodes assigned to BRM may not be used on CRM and vice versa.

## REUSABLE MAILPIECES

Another method of providing a return or reply vehicle for your correspondents is a reusable mailpiece. Reusable mailpieces are outgoing mailpieces designed so that your customers can reuse and return them after receipt.

The recipient reconfigures or modifies the reusable mailpiece to cover the original delivery address and expose the delivery address of the sender. Your design must take this into consideration.

## AUTHORIZATION AND FEES

The USPS requires no fees or prior authorization to distribute reusable mailpieces.

## REUSABLE MAILPIECE FORMAT

The recipient either refolds or removes part of a reusable mailpiece to prepare it for return. This process must allow the recipient to cover the original delivery address and reveal that of the sender for return.

During all phases of postal handling, it must be clear which is the intended delivery address. You must design a reusable mailpiece so that:

- At the time of mailing, the piece shows only the recipient's address, and if used, the corresponding barcode.
- At the time of mailing, you must cover the originator's (return) address and any applicable markings.
- When returned the piece must show only one complete delivery address, and if used, the appropriate markings, endorsement, FIM, and barcode.
- You must include instructions on how to properly reconfigure the mailpiece.

A reusable mailpiece, once it is reconfigured, may be designed to return as any one of the reply mail types previously covered in this module.

## Permit Imprint Mailings

As alternative for mailings originating as permit imprint mailings, both addresses may be visible on the original outgoing mailpiece. This applies to presorted, prebarcoded, permit imprint mailings only. In this case, you must locate the originator's address (where the reusable piece is returning to) on the reverse side of the mailpiece. The piece must also meet the following requirements:

- You must position the barcode for the recipient's address in the address block location.
- The originator's (return) address must also bear an address block barcode and the appropriate FIM.
- When originally mailed, you must either locate or obscure any postage preapplied for return purposes so that postal personnel do not mistake it as applying to the original piece.
- When reconfigured, the piece must still bear only one complete delivery address, FIM, and barcode. The original postage and markings may still be visible.

This Postal Service allows this option because permit imprints are not valid as return postage. Therefore, the postal personnel can tell the difference between the outgoing (original) address and the return address.

## RESTRICTIONS

Reusable mailpieces not meeting these requirements must be completely re-enveloped. Recipients must apply new postage before return.

## DEPOSIT AND ACCEPTANCE

By definition, mailers distribute reusable mailpieces via the mails. If required by postal standards, you must present the original mailing for acceptance.

**!** *The proper design of a reusable mailpiece is more of an art than a science. Be sure to consult closely with your local mailpiece design analyst to ensure compliance with these standards.*

### MERCHANDISE RETURN SERVICE

Merchandise return service allows mailers to receive mailable goods from their customers. The permit holder pays the postage and fees for the returned items. To return a piece, customers affix a merchandise return label to the parcel.

You may return parcels at the single-piece rates for First-Class Mail, Priority Mail, and Package Services. Permit holders may add postal insurance, delivery confirmation, pickup service, registered mail service, or special handling to the basic service.

### AUTHORIZATION AND FEES

The Postal Service requires an annual fee for merchandise return service. Mailers must have a Form 3615, *Mailing Permit Application and Customer Profile*, on file at the post office which will receive the returning parcels. A sample of the merchandise return label and customer's instructions for use must accompany the Form 3615.

If the permit holder desires registered mail service they must note "Registered Mail" on the application. Permit holders must also provide notice to the post office of any changes to the merchandise return label.

In addition to the annual MRS fee, the permit holder must pay an annual accounting fee. The Postal Service deducts the appropriate single-piece rate postage and special service fees for parcels returned from an advance deposit account. The mailer can use an existing postage due account for this purpose but must still pay the annual accounting fee.

### POSTAL GUIDANCE

Contact your local mailing requirements office, postmaster, or mailpiece design analyst for more information. They will help you analyze your options and can provide additional information on options such as receiving returned parcels at multiple post offices.

### LABEL FORMAT

All forms of printing are acceptable if sufficiently legible. You may not use handwriting, typewriting, or hand-stamping to prepare the label. The background may be any light color.

You may print the label format directly on the mailpiece or produce it as a label, a facsimile transmission (fax), or an electronic file that includes instructions. The label adhesive must be strong enough to bond securely to the parcel.

The merchandise return label may include a detachable acknowledgment of mailing. If included, you must perforate the acknowledgment for easy removal. Do not glue it to the parcel. You must also provide written instructions to the customer on how to use the label and mail the parcel.

Obtain guidance from your local postmaster or mailpiece design analyst (MDA) prior to printing. The Postal Service must approve merchandise return labels before use. The complete requirements for merchandise return service and label formatting are in DMM S923.



**DMM S923**

## REQUIRED ELEMENTS

Merchandise return labels must bear the following elements:

### “NO POSTAGE NECESSARY” ENDORSEMENT

You must print the endorsement “No Postage Necessary If Mailed In The United States” in the upper right corner of the label. The left edge of the endorsement must not extend more than 1 3/4 inches from the right edge of the label.

### “MERCHANDISE RETURN LABEL” Rectangle

Position the following text, directly above the delivery address, enclosed in the “Merchandise Return Label” rectangle:

- Line 1: Print the legend “MERCHANDISE RETURN LABEL” in capital letters, at least 3/16 inch high, above the delivery address.
- Line 2: The words “PERMIT NUMBER” or “PERMIT NO.” followed by the actual number and the city name and state of the issuing post office and the ZIP Code. This text must also be in capital letters.
- Line 3: The name and delivery address of the permit holder.

You must follow the format and order shown in the illustration for this information.

### Class Marking

If the permit holder wants to receive the piece back as either Priority Mail, First-Class Mail, Special Standard Mail, or Library Mail, you must add the appropriate class markings. Print the marking above and to the right of the merchandise return label rectangle. The marking must be at least 1/4 inch high. It may be either printed or rubber stamped. Only the permit holder may apply this marking.

Pieces without rate markings are returned as Parcel Post if 16 ounces or more. Pieces under 16 ounces are returned as either First-Class or Priority Mail.

### “POSTAGE DUE...” Statement

If no special service is requested, the text “POSTAGE DUE COMPUTED BY DELIVERY UNIT” must appear in capital letters above and to the left of the *merchandise return label rectangle*.

Directly below the “POSTAGE DUE...” endorsement you must print, in capital letters, a list for computing the postage due charges:

POSTAGE  
\$ \_\_\_\_\_

MERCHANDISE RETURN FEE \$ \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL POSTAGE AND FEES DUE \$ \_\_\_\_\_

INSURANCE DESIRED BY  
PERMIT HOLDER FOR \$ \_\_\_\_\_

### Customer’s Return Address

Show the return address of the customer mailing back the parcel in the upper left corner. If not preprinted, provide space for the customer to apply their return address.

### Delivery Address

Above the delivery address print the lines “POSTAGE DUE UNIT” and “US POSTAL SERVICE,” in capital letters. Follow with the delivery address of the postage due unit at the office where the permit is authorized. This text must be at least 1 inch from the left edge of the piece.

### Horizontal Bars

Place a series of horizontal bars below the “No Postage Necessary...” endorsement. The bars must be the same size, at least 1 inch long, and 1/16 inch in thickness. Evenly space the vertical column of bars and do not extend them below the delivery address (street or PO Box #) line.

### Facing Identification Mark

Do not use a facing identification mark (FIM) on merchandise return labels.

## MERCHANDISE RETURN LABEL WITH MAILING ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Location of Class of Mail Endorsement

**FROM:** \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

DELIVERY POST OFFICE  
 COMPUTE POSTAGE DUE  
**I.D. # 654321A**

POSTAGE DUE COMPUTED BY:  
 DELIVERY UNIT IF NO SPECIAL SERVICES (OR)  
 ACCEPTANCE POST OFFICE IF SPECIAL  
 SERVICES ARE REQUESTED

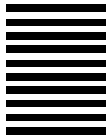
POSTAGE OR BPRS FEE \_\_\_\_\_  
 MERCHANDISE RETURN FEE \_\_\_\_\_  
 \*INSURANCE FEE (IF ANY) \_\_\_\_\_  
 \*SPECIAL HANDLING FEE (IF ANY) \_\_\_\_\_  
 \*PICKUP SERVICE FEE (IF ANY) \_\_\_\_\_  
 TOTAL POSTAGE AND FEES DUE \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 INSURANCE DESIRED BY \_\_\_\_\_  
 PERMIT HOLDER FOR \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 (VALUE)

**MERCHANDISE RETURN LABEL**

PERMIT NO. 1 CONESTOGA PA 17516  
 ABC CO. 501 FIRST AVE.

**POSTAGE DUE UNIT**  
 US POSTAL SERVICE  
 PO BOX 9998  
 CONESTOGA PA 17516-9998

NO POSTAGE  
 NECESSARY  
 IF MAILED  
 IN THE  
 UNITED STATES



**FROM:** \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

I.D. # 654321A

ROUND DATE  
 STAMP \_\_\_\_\_

ACCEPTANCE EMPLOYEE  
 INITIAL \_\_\_\_\_

**MERCHANDISE RETURN  
 MAILING ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

PERMIT NO. 1 CONESTOGA PA 17516  
 ABC CO. 501 FIRST AVE.

### MERCHANDISE RETURN SERVICE WITH ADDITIONAL SPECIAL SERVICES

If the permit holder desires additional special services like registered mail, insurance, delivery confirmation, pickup service, or special handling, various format elements must be changed or added. For instance:

- You must use a different "POSTAGE DUE..." statement.
- You must add the corresponding entries to the postage calculations.
- You must include the required endorsements and markings for each service.

Seek postal guidance for the proper way to combine and format your label for these additional services.

### RESTRICTIONS

The Postal Service computes postage for zone-rated parcels with no cancellation or return address at zone 4.

The Postal Service returns to the sender parcels requiring registered or insurance service deposited in collection boxes. If no return address is present, these parcels are treated as undeliverable.

### DEPOSIT AND ACCEPTANCE

The permit holder may distribute merchandise return labels as enclosures with merchandise or as separate items, as a facsimile transmission (fax), or as an electronic transmission for customer downloading and printing.

Merchandise return labels may be distributed as the reply half of a qualifying double postcard. For this method you must have prior approval of the appropriate Rates and Classification Service Center (RCSC).

The customer must mail the parcel in the service area of the post office shown in the return address. Parcels with special services or mailing acknowledgments must be tendered directly to postal personnel.

## BULK PARCEL RETURN SERVICE

Mailers of Standard Mail machinable parcels who have their undeliverable parcels returned via an ancillary service endorsement can now participate in Bulk Parcel Return Service (BPRS). Participation in BPRS can represent significant savings in return charges.

The service is limited to mailers who have over 10,000 undeliverable parcels returned per year. Only machinable parcels weighing less than one pound and originally mailed as Standard Mail are eligible for BPRS.

The Postal Service returns BPRS pieces to a designated postal facility such as a Processing and Distribution Center (P&DC). Mailers can then pick them up or the Postal Service will deliver them if more efficient for postal operations.

## AUTHORIZATION AND FEES

Mailers must submit a written request to the postmaster at the office where the parcels will be returned. This request must include the annual permit fee and annual accounting fee:

- Documentation of the 10,000 piece minimum yearly volume.
- A description of the mail.
- A sample of the documentation the mailer will use to report the number of parcels returned each day.
- The requested location and frequency of pickup.

The mailer must have an advance deposit account. The permit holder pays the BPRS per piece charge via this account. Mailers using BPRS pay only the per piece charge for each parcel returned.

## BPRS FORMAT

Each piece must bear one of the qualifying BPRS endorsements. The return address must be in the delivery area of the issuing post office. Valid BPRS endorsements are:

- Return Service Requested—BPRS.
- Address Service Requested—BPRS.

The piece must meet all requirements for the use of ancillary service endorsements. The Postal Service only charges the BPRS fee for returned pieces, not the weighted fee (see module four, *Addressing*).

## RESTRICTIONS

The assigned BPRS permit number must not appear on the mailpiece. Any Standard Mail piece that qualifies for a single-piece Package Services rate and is so endorsed, is not eligible for BPRS.

## SPECIAL SERVICES

No special services are allowed.

## DEPOSIT AND ACCEPTANCE

You must initially present BPRS eligible pieces as part of a presorted Standard Mail mailing. All relevant standards apply. Undeliverable parcels are returned by postal delivery personnel.



### SUMMARY

Reply mail, sent by your business to customers or potential customers, is a type of return mailpiece with a request for a response. Order forms and invoices are common types of reply mail.

Reply and return mail envelopes and labels are the vehicle for this communication with your customers. The Postal Service offers a number of options for your use. You may simply provide return envelopes for your customers (CRM). You may prepay the postage for all envelopes you distribute with meter reply mail.

Business reply mail, on the other hand, allows you to distribute many more pieces than you anticipate might be returned. You pay only for those pieces that are actually returned to you. Postal reply mail options allow your customer contacts to be truly interactive, further enhancing an already attractive and effective communications medium.

The MQC program is meant to provide a thorough exposure to all options and relevant standards for reply mail. Publication 25, *Designing Letter and Reply Mail*, provides complete coverage and illustrations for BRM, CRM, and meter reply mail. Publication 25 is intended as a key reference for all designers.

**EXERCISE 9 - 3**

Directions: Circle the best response to answer the following questions. Check your answers when you have completed the exercise.

1. Unless originally mailed using a permit imprint, a reusable mailpiece must show only the recipient's address at the time of mailing.
  - a) true
  - b) false
2. Which of the following special services are available for use with merchandise return service?
  - a) bulk insured service
  - b) collect on delivery (COD) service
  - c) restricted delivery
  - d) registered mail service
3. Pieces bearing merchandise return labels without a clear rate marking, that weigh more than 16 ounces, are returned as:
  - a) First-Class Mail
  - b) Parcel Post
  - c) Priority Mail
  - d) Library Mail
4. A properly designed merchandise return label includes the correct facing identification mark (FIM).
  - a) true
  - b) false
5. To be eligible for Bulk Parcel Return Service (BPRS) a mailer must receive returned parcels totaling at least \_\_\_\_\_ a year.
  - a) 1,000
  - b) 10,000
  - c) 100,000
  - d) 1,000,000
6. Bulk Parcel Return Service (BPRS) is available for:
  - a) Package Services parcels only
  - b) Package Services machinable parcels only
  - c) Standard Mail parcels only
  - d) Standard Mail machinable parcels only

### ANSWERS TO EXERCISE 9 - 3

1. **a, true;** unless mailed using a permit imprint, a reusable mailpiece must be configured to obscure the original sender's address when mailed.
2. **d, registered mail service;** postal insurance and special handling may also be included with merchandise return service.
3. **b, Parcel Post;** pieces may be returned, at the discretion of the permit holder, as either Priority Mail, First-Class Mail, Media Mail, or Library Mail if properly marked.
4. **b, false;** facing identification marks are not used on merchandise return labels.
5. **b, 10,000;** is the minimum volume requirement for returned parcels to qualify for Bulk Parcel Return Service (BPRS).
6. **d, Standard Mail machinable parcels only;** weighing less than 16 ounces and originally mailed as part of a presorted Standard Mail mailing.

The Postal Service offers many additional services that you may combine with its basic delivery offerings. Most of these are listed in the Special Services module of the Domestic Mail Manual (DMM S900). These special services represent additional value added offerings that you may add to your basic mailing service. You choose and pay for only those services you truly need. The ability to mix and match these services as desired remains the premier feature of USPS special services.

This module will outline the basic requirements and features of these services, along with the necessary postal forms and markings. Afterwards, you should be able to recognize when you or your customers will benefit from using one or more of these services.



## WHAT YOU WILL LEARN ABOUT POSTAL SPECIAL SERVICES

Upon completion of this module, you should be able to do the following:

- Describe the basic features of each postal special service option for:
  - Certified Mail
  - Collect on Delivery (COD)
  - Insurance
  - Certificate of Mailing
  - Registered
  - Restricted Delivery
  - Return Receipt
  - Return Receipt for Merchandise
  - Special Handling
  - Delivery Confirmation
  - Signature Confirmation
- Discuss the basic requirements and restrictions for each.
- Identify the proper content and placement of required markings.
- Explain the restrictions for entering each type of special service into the mailstream.



*Certified mail does not provide insurance. For valuable items, use insured or registered mail.*

## SPECIAL SERVICES

The Postal Service offers additional value added services you may use. These services are covered in *Domestic Mail Manual* Module S, Special Services.



### DMM S900

Each of these services may only be used with certain classes of mail. For example, registered mail is only available with First-Class Mail. The Postal Service charges a fee, in addition to normal postage, for each service you select. Choose the special service that best meets the needs of both you and your customer.

## CERTIFIED MAIL—DMM S912

Certified mail provides proof of delivery of mail. The sender receives a mailing receipt at the time of mailing. The Postal Service keeps only a record of delivery at the recipient's post office.

## Service Combinations

Only First-Class Mail (including Priority Mail) can be certified. You may combine certified mail with return receipt service and/or restricted delivery service.

## Markings

You must affix Form 3800, *Receipt for Certified Mail*, to each piece. Mailers may also use privately printed Forms 3800.

You must obtain authorization prior to printing versions of these postal forms. The mailpiece design analyst is the approving postal official for this purpose. Contact your local MDA for more information.

## CERTIFIED MAIL LABEL

U.S. Postal Service  
CERTIFIED MAIL RECEIPT  
(Domestic Mail Only; No Insurance Coverage Provided)

Postage: \$  
Certified Fee: \$  
Return Receipt Fee (Endorsement Required): \$  
Restricted Delivery Fee (Endorsement Required): \$  
Total Postage & Fees: \$

Recipient's Name (Please Print clearly) (To be completed by sender):  
Street, Apt. No., or PO Box No.:  
City, State, ZIP+4:

PS Form 3800, February 2008 (See Instructions for Instructions)

Endorse the mailpiece "Restricted Delivery" if you desire this service. In this case, you must address the article to an individual.

## Deposit and Acceptance

So long as you properly complete and attach the correct forms, postage, and fees, you may deposit certified mail in a collection box. As always, you may also deposit certified mail at any post office.

Mailers may use Form 3877, *Firm Mailing Book for Accountable Mail*, for multiple records.

## Restrictions

Certified mail service is not available for international mail. Standard Mail may not use certified service.

## COLLECT ON DELIVERY—DMM S921

Use Collect on Delivery (COD) when you want to collect payment for merchandise and/or postage upon delivery. If the recipient pays by check, the check is forwarded to the mailer. If the recipient pays by cash, the Postal Service sends the mailer a postal money order.

The fees for COD service include insurance. The amount collected or the amount of insurance, whichever is higher, determines the COD fee.

### Service Combinations

You may use COD service for:

- Express Mail.
- First-Class Mail.
- Priority Mail.
- Package Services.

You may also obtain return receipt, delivery confirmation, registered, signature confirmation, special handling, and restricted delivery service with COD mail.

### Markings

Mailers must affix Form 3816, *COD Mailing and Delivery Receipt*, to each piece. If sending more than three items, the mailer may use Form 3816-AS, COD Card—Firm Mailings. Mailers may also use privately printed forms upon approval.

You must obtain authorization prior to printing versions of these postal forms. The mailpiece design analyst is the approving postal official for this purpose. Contact your local MDA for more information.

## Deposit and Acceptance

You must present COD articles at a post office, or to a rural carrier. Do not deposit COD mail in maildrops or street collection boxes.

The Postal Service identifies COD articles by a unique number. Mailers may use Form 3877, *Firm Mailing Book*, as receipts for multiple items.

## Restrictions

The recipient must have ordered the goods being shipped. COD service may not be used for:

- International mail.
- Collection agency purposes.
- Billing only. Balance due on past shipments may be included with a shipment of merchandise, if the addressee consents to such action.
- Articles shipped to military addresses showing an APO or an FPO designation.
- The return of merchandise, unless the new addressee (distributor, retailer, manufacturer, etc.) consents in advance.
- The mailing of motion picture films.

You may not use COD for Presorted Standard Mail.

## INSURANCE

Insured mail provides coverage for lost, missing, or damaged articles. Insurance coverage for loss is the actual value of the item.

The sender keeps a receipt, but no record is kept at the office of mailing. For mail insured for more than \$50, the Postal Service keeps a record of delivery.

### Service Combinations

You may insure all Package Services. You may also insure Package Services matter mailed at the First-Class Mail and Priority Mail rates.

You may use delivery confirmation, signature confirmation, return receipt for merchandise for items insured for \$50 or less, special handling, parcel airlift, and merchandise return service with insured mail. You may obtain restricted delivery service, and return receipt service for parcels insured for more than \$50.

### Markings

Stamp each package on the address side with the elliptical insured stamp if insured for \$50 or less. If insured for more than \$50, affix Form 3813-P. Place the required stamp or Form 3813-P above the delivery address and to the right of the return address.

Mailers may use privately printed barcoded Forms 3813-P. However, authorization must be obtained prior to printing. The mailpiece design analyst is the approving official for this purpose. Contact your MDA for additional information.

All insured items must be postmarked unless a meter stamp or permit imprint is used to pay postage. Endorsements for private insurance may not appear on the address side of mail, but may appear elsewhere. The Postal Service prohibits private insurance endorsements that resemble postal markings.

### ELLIPTICAL STAMP, FORM 3813-P



## Deposit and Acceptance

Mailers must present insured mail at a post office, or to a rural carrier. Do not deposit insured mail in a maildrop or street collection box.

The Postal Service keeps no records for insured parcels. Mailers must write the addressee's name and address on the receipt and keep it. Show this receipt when filing a claim.

Mailers may also use Form 3877, *Firm Mailing Book for Accountable Mail*, for multiple listings of three or more items. The sheets of the book become the mailer's receipts.

## Restrictions

Mailers may not insure matter that is:

- Sent to prospective purchasers who have not ordered or authorized the sending of the merchandise.
- Nonmailable matter.
- Not adequately packaged to withstand normal postal handling.
- So fragile that it cannot be carried safely regardless of the packaging.
- Without the complete name and address of the sender and recipient.
- Classified as, and *required* to be mailed at First-Class Mail rates (see module one, *Classes of Mail*).
- Mailed as Presorted Standard Mail that is not subject to the residual shape surcharge.

## BULK INSURED SERVICE

Bulk insured service is a less costly, more efficient process for purchasing insurance on large quantities of parcels. Using bulk insurance saves mailers on per piece insurance fees.

Bulk insurance applies to both “unnumbered” and “numbered insured” articles. It will provide compensation for either the actual value of the article at the time of mailing or the wholesale cost of the contents to the sender—whichever is less.

### Markings

The basic piece markings are the same as for regular insured service.

### Deposit and Acceptance

You must enter bulk insured mailings under an approved manifest mailing system agreement. Mailers must apply for authorization through their local postmaster or designee by completing the customer portion of the Bulk Insured Service (BIS) verification form.

The mailer must provide a hard copy of Form 3877, *Firm Mailing Book for Accountable Mail*, or a facsimile. Mailers must also provide a copy of Form 3877 on a disk or other electronic medium.

### Restrictions

In addition to the restrictions on regular insurance, only the sender may file claims for loss or damage under this service. Mailers must mail a minimum of 10,000 insured articles annually. You may not insure items mailed at Standard Mail rates nor matter required to be mailed at the First-Class rates.

## CERTIFICATE OF MAILING—DMM S914

A certificate of mailing is a receipt showing that an item was mailed. The Postal Service keeps no record of delivery of the item. The certificate does not provide insurance coverage for loss or damage.

### Service Combinations

You may obtain a certificate of mailing for mail of any class. The Postal Service provides a certificate for bulk mailings of identical weight pieces of First-Class Mail, Standard Mail, and Package Services bearing stamps or metered postage. This certifies only the total number mailed, and is not available for mailings paid for by permit imprint account.

### Markings

There are no special markings for this service.

### Deposit and Acceptance

The mailer must complete a Form 3817, *Certificate of Mailing*, for each item. Use Form 3606 for bulk mailings of identical weight pieces. Mailers may also use Form 3877, *Firm Mailing Book for Accountable Mail*, for multiple listings of three or more items.

You must present certificates of mailing to postal personnel for acceptance.

### Restrictions

The Postal Service does not issue a certificate for bulk mailings paid by permit imprint.



## REGISTERED MAIL—DMM S911

Registered mail is the most secure service option offered by the Postal Service. It provides added protection for valuable and important mail.

Registered articles are under tight security from the point of mailing to the point of delivery. The Postal Service provides the mailer with a receipt and keeps a delivery record at the addressee's post office.

### Service Combinations

Only matter mailed at the First-Class Mail rates (including Priority Mail) may be registered. The face (address side) of a registered article must be at least 5 inches long and 3 1/2 inches high. Mailers may combine registered mail service with collect on delivery (COD) service, delivery confirmation, signature confirmation, merchandise return service, return receipt service, and restricted delivery.

### Markings

Registered mail must bear a red Label 200. The label contains a registration number in OCR-A readable font. Place the label above the delivery address and to the right of the return address.

### LABEL 200



Mailers may also use privately printed labels. You must obtain authorization prior to printing versions of these postal forms. Contact your local MDA for more information.

## Deposit and Acceptance

You must present registered mail in person at a post office, or to a rural carrier. The mailer must tell the USPS clerk the full value of the matter presented for registration. The mailer must tell the USPS employee if the matter is fragile, and, if so, describe the packaging.

The mailer must securely seal all packages and envelopes. Regulations do not permit postal employees to help customers seal registered mail. Mailers may also use Form 3877, *Firm Mailing Book for Accountable Mail*, as their receipt.

## Restrictions

Items presented for registered mail service must not be:

- Business reply mail.
- Opened and resealed or otherwise improperly packaged.
- Deposited in a collection box.
- Multiple articles tied or fastened together.
- Presented for mailing in a padded envelope, a plastic envelope (including Tyvek), or an envelope or mailer made of glossy-coated paper.

You may not use registered mail for Presorted Standard Mail.

## RESTRICTED DELIVERY

The Postal Service will only deliver mail sent restricted delivery to the specified addressee. This service is subject to the following exceptions:

- Mail for famous personalities and for executives of large organizations is normally delivered to an authorized agent.
- Mail for military and government officials may be delivered to a person authorized by the addressee or the agency.
- Mail for prison inmates may be delivered to the warden or designee.
- Mail for minors or persons under guardianship may be delivered to their parents or guardians.

## Service Combinations

You may obtain restricted delivery only for:

- registered mail.
- COD mail.
- signature confirmation.
- delivery confirmation.
- parcel airtail service.
- special handling.
- certified mail.
- mail insured for more than \$50.

## Markings

Mailers must mark pieces sent with restricted delivery service "Restricted Delivery." Place this endorsement above the delivery address and to the right of the return address.

## Deposit and Acceptance

A mailer may request restricted delivery service at the time of mailing, or by marking the piece "Restricted Delivery." The mailer may request restricted delivery after mailing by notifying the mailing post office in writing.

## Restrictions

The Postal Service refunds restricted delivery fees only when it fails to give restricted delivery service. Service properly rendered would include delivery to authorized agents (see above).

## RETURN RECEIPT—S915

Return receipt service provides a mailer with evidence of delivery. The return receipt is the sender's proof of delivery.

After delivery, the USPS mails the return receipt back to the sender. The return receipt shows who signed for the item and the date of delivery.

## Service Combinations

The service is only available for Express Mail and qualifying mail sent using other special services, including:

- Certified.
- Collect on Delivery (COD).
- Insured (for more than \$50).
- Registered mail.

## Markings

Mailers must mark pieces "Return Receipt Requested." Place this endorsement above the delivery address and to the right of the return address.

## Deposit and Acceptance

You must mail articles with return receipt service as required by the special services with which it is combined.

A mailer may request this service at the time of mailing using Form 3811, or by marking the piece "Return Receipt Requested." The mailer may request return receipt service after mailing by sending the delivery post office a completed Form 3811-A.

Mailers may also use privately printed Forms 3811. You must obtain authorization prior to printing versions of these postal forms. Contact your local MDA for more information.

## Restrictions

The Postal Service refunds return receipt fees only when it fails to furnish a return receipt. You may not use return receipt service with Presorted Standard Mail.

### RETURN RECEIPT FOR MERCHANDISE—DMM S917

This form of return receipt service provides a mailing receipt, return receipt, and record of delivery. The Postal Service keeps a delivery record, but no record at the office of mailing.

#### Service Combinations

This service is available only for merchandise sent as:

- Priority Mail.
- Package Services.
- Standard Mail (Subject to the residual shape surcharge).

You may combine this service with special handling service, delivery confirmation, insured (\$50 or less), and parcel airlift service.

#### Markings

You must use Form 3804 for return receipt for merchandise service. Place the form and the endorsement "Return Receipt Requested" above the delivery address and to the right of the return address.

Mailers may also use privately printed Forms 3804. You must obtain authorization prior to printing versions of these postal forms. Contact your local MDA for more information.

#### Deposit and Acceptance

A mailer must mail the articles at a post office, or give the mail to a rural carrier. You may not deposit mail requesting this service in a letterdrop or street collection box.

### SPECIAL HANDLING—DMM S930

Special handling provides preferential handling in the dispatch and transportation of your items. Special handling service is required for unusual contents needing additional care and handling. Examples of such contents include live poultry or bees.

Special handling service is not necessary for ordinary fragile items. Proper packaging with the marking "FRAGILE" is sufficient. Use registered mail with postal insurance for valuable or irreplaceable items.

#### Service Combinations

Special handling service is available only for First-Class Mail (including Priority Mail) and Package Services.

You may combine special handling service with:

- Parcel Airlift Service.
- Delivery Confirmation.
- Insured Mail.
- Collect on Delivery (COD).
- Return Receipt for Merchandise.
- Signature Confirmation.

#### Markings

Mailers must mark pieces "Special Handling." Place this endorsement above the delivery address and to the right of the return address.

#### Deposit and Acceptance

So long as you properly mark the piece and apply proper postage and fees, you may deposit special handling mail in a collection box. As always, you may also mail at any post office.

#### Restrictions

You may not use special handling with Presorted Standard Mail.

## SIGNATURE CONFIRMATION — DMM S919

Signature Confirmation provides the mailer with information about the date and time an article was delivered or attempted to be delivered. Signature Confirmation is available at the time of mailing. The Postal Service maintains a delivery record that includes the recipient's signature and is made available via fax or mail upon the mailer's request. Customers can 'waive the signature' at the time of delivery, however, they must accept the employee's signature and date of delivery as proof of delivery and they will be provided only with the date of delivery.

### Service Combinations

Signature Confirmation is available for Priority Mail and Package Services. It may be used with Collect on Delivery (COD), Insured Mail, Registered Mail, Restricted delivery (if purchased with insurance over \$50, COD, or registry service) and Special Handling.

Signature Confirmation service options are as follows:

1. Retail option - available at post offices at the time of mailing. This option provides a mailing receipt and access to Signature Confirmation information by calling 1-800-888-1811 or accessing the USPS web site at [www.usps.com](http://www.usps.com) and providing the article number.
2. Electronic Option - available to mailers who apply identifying barcodes to each piece, establish an electronic link with the Postal Service to exchange acceptance and delivery date, provide an electronic file of Signature Confirmation pieces that are entered for mailing, and retrieve delivery status information electronically. No mailing receipt is provided. Mailers can access delivery information through their electronic file or by calling 1-800-888-1811 or accessing the USPS web site at [www.usps.com](http://www.usps.com) and providing the article number.

## Markings

Mailers may use one of three Signature Confirmation label options.

1. Form 153, obtained from the post office at no charge. This form may be used only with the retail option.
2. Privately printed Form 153 labels meeting the specifications for Signature Confirmation barcodes outlined in Publication 91, *Delivery Confirmation Technical Guide/Integrated Barcode Signature Confirmation Addendum*, available at [www.usps.com](http://www.usps.com).
3. USPS Label 315, available at no charge to electronic option mailers.

### SIGNATURE CONFIRMATION LABEL



## Deposit and Acceptance.

A mailer may mail articles with retail option Signature Confirmation at a post office, branch, or station, or give articles to a rural carrier. You may not deposit Signature Confirmation in a maildrop or street collection box. The applicable Signature Confirmation fee must be paid in addition to the correct postage.

## Restrictions

Signature Confirmation service does not include insurance. It is not available for mail paid for with precanceled stamps or mail addressed to International or APO/FPO destinations.

## DELIVERY CONFIRMATION DMM S918

Delivery confirmation service provides the mailer with the date the USPS delivered an article. Alternatively, the USPS will confirm a delivery attempt.

The Postal Service does not keep a record of receipt at the office of mailing. Delivery confirmation does not include insurance. You may purchase insurance separately.

### Service Combinations

Delivery confirmation service is only available for Priority Mail and Package Services. You may combine delivery confirmation with:

- Insured Mail.
- Registered Mail.
- COD.
- Special Handling.
- Return Receipt, if insured for over \$50 or combined with COD or registered service.
- Restricted Delivery, if insured for over \$50 or combined with COD or registered service.
- Return Receipt for Merchandise.

Delivery confirmation service options are as follows:

1. Retail Option—available at post offices at the time of mailing. This option provides a mailing receipt and access to delivery confirmation information by calling 1-800-222-1811 or accessing the USPS web site at [www.usps.com](http://www.usps.com).
2. Electronic Option—available only to mailers who establish an electronic link to exchange acceptance and delivery data.

### Markings

Mailers must use one of three delivery confirmation label options:

1. USPS printed Forms 152 from the post office.
2. Privately printed Forms 152.
3. Privately printed barcode labels meeting the specifications for delivery confirmation barcodes outlined in Publication 91.

You must obtain authorization prior to printing versions of Forms 152. Contact the National Customer Support Center (NCSC) at 1-800-331-5746 for more information.

Place the barcoded label section of Form 152 either above the delivery address and to the right of the return address, or to the left of the return address. You must place the label on the address side for mailing.

### DELIVERY CONFIRMATION LABEL



### Deposit and Acceptance

Mailers must mail a retail delivery confirmation item at a post office or give the mail to a rural carrier. You may not deposit delivery confirmation mail in a maildrop or street collection box.

The applicable delivery confirmation fee, if any, must be paid in addition to the correct postage. Fees apply to all pieces except those mailed at Priority Mail rates using the electronic option. For a complete listing of all postage rates and fees, see *Domestic Mail Manual* R900.



**DMM R900**

### Restrictions

Further restrictions apply. Mailers must follow the procedures outlined in Publication 91, *Delivery Confirmation Technical Guide*. Mailers may contact the National Customer Support Center (NCSC) at 1-800-331-5746 for a copy of this publication. Publication 91 is also available at [www.usps.com](http://www.usps.com)

## CONFIRM

CONFIRM is the product name for the electronic tracking service introduced by the USPS for barcoded mail. Confirm allows customers to electronically track both outbound and inbound letter mail.

To use the CONFIRM process, the customer prints the PLANET Code anywhere in the wide area barcode read zone on the front of the mailpiece. The PLANET Code is the inverse of the POSTNET Code (see module five, *USPS Barcodes*).

PLANET Codes offer mailers the ability to predict delivery, anticipate payments, and diagnose bottlenecks. This information gives mailers accurate and timely delivery information for marketing purposes.

### Service Combinations

You may use CONFIRM and PLANET Codes with any qualifying prebarcoded mailing.

### Markings

The Postal Service requires no additional markings, other than the PLANET Code and the rate markings required by the discount category and class of mail.

### Deposit and Acceptance

Mailpieces using PLANET Codes must be part of qualifying, discounted, prebarcoded mailings. All discounted mailings must be presented to postal personnel for acceptance at a time and place designated by the local postmaster.

### Restrictions

Mailers must be able to receive the data electronically using either a file transfer protocol or over the Postal Service web site. Visit the USPS web site for the most current and up to date information on this unique value added service, or contact your local postal representative.

The Postal Service offers a wide variety of value-added services in addition to its basic delivery services. You may combine these special services in many different ways. Choose the appropriate service combination that best meets your company's or your client's unique delivery and fulfillment needs.

If you need more information, further clarification, or help in selecting the appropriate options, contact your local postmaster, mailing requirements personnel, customer service representative, or account representative. As always, the *Domestic Mail Manual* remains the primary reference and ultimate authority for service definitions.

## SUMMARY

**EXERCISE 10 - 1**

Directions: Circle the best response to answer the following questions. Check your answers when you have completed the exercise.

1. Which of the following classes of mail can be sent as Certified Mail?
  - a) Standard Mail
  - b) Package Services
  - c) First-Class Mail
  - d) Periodicals Mail
2. Collect on Delivery (COD) service may not be used for:
  - a) international mail
  - b) billing statements
  - c) shipments to APO or FPO military addresses
  - d) all of the above
3. Presorted Standard Mail may not use certified, COD, registered, insurance, return receipt, return receipt for merchandise, or special handling services.
  - a) true
  - b) false
4. Return receipt service can only be used for mail sent using:
  - a) meter stamps
  - b) special packaging
  - c) other special services
  - d) delivery point barcodes
5. Return receipt for merchandise service is not available for merchandise sent as:
  - a) Priority Mail
  - b) Package Services
  - c) Standard Mail without a residual shape surcharge.
  - d) all of the above
6. The Postal Service's delivery confirmation service offers two options: a retail option, and an electronic option.
  - a) true
  - b) false

**ANSWERS TO EXERCISE 10 - 1**

1. **c, First-Class Mail**; only First-Class Mail (including Priority Mail) may be sent as Certified Mail.
2. **d, all of the above**; none of these examples may be sent using COD service.
3. **a, true**; these special services are not available with Standard Mail mailings.
4. **c, other special services**; return receipt service must be used in combination with another qualifying special service.
5. **c, Standard Mail**; without a residual shape surcharge.
6. **a, true**; the retail option is offered over-the-counter at post office lobbies or by a rural carrier. The electronic option is available to mailers who establish an electronic link to exchange acceptance and delivery data.



## POSTAL CONTACTS

**T**he following is a list of Postal Service job titles and position descriptions that you will find useful. These are postal employees to contact for information when performing your duties as mailpiece quality control specialist at your company.

### MAILPIECE DESIGN ANALYSTS

The mailpiece design analysts' primary job is to help customers design mailpieces that meet postal standards and to increase the amount of mail compatible with the sorting technology used by the Postal Service. They visit customers to suggest ways for mailers to conform to barcode sorter (BCS) standards so that customers can take full advantage of the automated processing equipment of the Postal Service. Mailpiece design analysts can also determine the causes for failure of automated equipment to correctly handle customer mail and suggest improvements for the customer's mailpiece design.

### CONSUMER AFFAIRS REPRESENTATIVES

Consumer affairs representatives respond to customer complaints, inquiries, and suggestions. They provide for the collection, tracking, and analyzing of complaint data and make recommendations for corrective action to improve service to customers. They also supervise the Consumer Service Card program, which enables customers to register complaints, offer suggestions, and give comments about postal products and services.

### ACCOUNT REPRESENTATIVES

Account representatives analyze needs of large volume mailers to determine the best postal programs, products, and services to help the customer's mailing operations. Their primary job is to ensure that customers understand how the Postal Service functions and how the customer's organization can work with the USPS to provide them with the best possible service.

### NATIONAL CUSTOMER SUPPORT CENTER, MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE

The National Customer Support Center (NCSC) in Memphis, Tennessee (1-800-238-3150) handles customer requests for postal products and services. Postal products include files containing postal address information, such as the Carrier Route Information System (CRIS), Drop Shipment locations, Delivery Sequence Files, and ZIP+4 data. Services include ZIP+4 conversion of customer address files, ordering postal publications (such as Publication 65, *National 5-Digit ZIP Code Directory*), and the testing of CASS/PAVE software. Hours of the NCSC are 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Central Time.

**POSTMASTER**

The postmaster manages, through subordinate supervisors, the operation of a post office, providing distribution, delivery, collection, and window services. The postmaster may also provide for the operation of carrier stations or finance branches within a large area, such as a multiZIP Code city, where two or more additional facilities are used to handle the mail.

**CUSTOMER SERVICE SUPERVISOR**

The customer service supervisor directly supervises employees engaged in the distribution, dispatch, collection, and delivery of mail in a delivery unit. Customer service supervisors report to postmasters.

**POSTAL INSPECTOR**

The postal inspector investigates criminal acts involving the use of the postal system. Inspectors are responsible for protecting postal consumers, the mail, postal funds and property, and conducting internal audits.

**CLASSIFICATION SUPPORT SPECIALISTS**

Classification support specialists develop and implement policies and regulations that respond to customer and operational requirements for the following programs: mail classification, acceptance, verification, postage payment, and special services. They provide direction and technical guidance to customers and postal employees in the implementation of customer requirement programs.

**RATES AND CLASSIFICATION SERVICE CENTERS (RCSCS)**

RCSCs provide oversight, support, and guidance for local post offices engaged in acceptance and classification activities. RCSCs issue higher level rulings on classification and acceptance decisions.

A number of the Classification Support Specialists noted above are located at the regional RCSC offices. A complete listing of RCSCs and their coverage areas is in DMM G042.

## MANAGER, BUSINESS MAIL ENTRY

Manages activities related to mailing requirements, business mail acceptance, and revenue protection for a USPS district. Provides program and technical guidance on mail preparation and business mail entry operational procedures to all post offices within a district.

A complete listing of USPS Managers, Business Mail Entry, by District and RCSC, with coverage ZIP Codes, is in DMM G042.



**DMM G042**

## SUPERVISOR, BUSINESS MAIL ENTRY UNIT (BMEU)

The supervisor at the business mail entry unit ensures that all bulk, presort, and automation mail is accepted properly. The supervisor ensures that employees observe proper acceptance procedures regarding classification, weighing, computing postage, and recording of BMEU transactions. The BMEU supervisor reports to the manager, business mail entry at a designated district.

## DETACHED MAIL UNIT CLERKS

Detached mail unit clerks are Postal Service bulk mail clerks physically assigned to a mailer's facility. They are responsible for verification, acceptance, and dispatch of bulk mail directly from the mailer's plant.

## MAILING REQUIREMENTS CLERKS

Mailing requirements clerks are a part of the business mail entry department. Typically located at major post offices throughout a district, they are available for customer applications for permits and non profit authorizations. They assist customers with questions about the preparation of bulk mailings, and accept money for deposit accounts. In some locations, free classes in bulk mail preparation are given by the mailing requirements clerks. Mailing requirements clerks can interpret regulations outlined in the *Domestic Mail Manual* and can answer questions concerning classification of mailpieces.



*BMEU Supervisors are key decision makers and influencers in the USPS acceptance process. Establish a good working relationship with your local BMEU supervisor!*

## CHECKLISTS

LETTER-SIZE MAILPIECE DESIGN CHARACTERISTICS CHECKLIST  
FOR OCR (OPTICAL CHARACTER READER) "READABILITY"

The ideal characteristics of an addressed letter-size mailpiece:

- **mailpiece material**—envelopes: minimum, 16-pound paper; cards (such as reply cards, postcards): minimum, 75-pound offset paper.
- **mailpiece color** (includes inserts showing through windows)—preferably white. If colored, reflectance of at least 50 percent in the red portion and 45 percent in the green portion of the optical spectrum.
- **mailpiece dimensions**—minimum: 3 1/2" (3.500") high, 5" long, 0.007" thick; maximum: 6 1/8" (6.125") high, 11 1/2" (11.500") long, 1/4" (0.250") thick.
- **address block location**—1/2" (0.500") vertical clear space (margin) from left and right edges of envelope; at least 5/8" (0.625") but no more than 2 3/4" (2.750") horizontal clear space from bottom edge of envelope.
- **address format**—uniform left margin, all caps (all uppercase characters), two-letter state abbreviation, ZIP Code or ZIP+4.
- **address font style**—uniform stroke widths, simple sans serif style.
- **address character height**—8 to 18 points (80 to 200 mils).
- **address character stroke width**—3/4 to 2 points (10 to 30 mils).
- **address character spacing**—3/4 to 3 points (10 to 40 mils) between characters.
- **address word spacing**—1 to 5 em spaces (1 to 5 full-size character spaces) between words.
- **address line spacing**—2 points to 2 em spaces (28 mils to 2 full-size character heights) between lines.
- **address skew**—maximum 5 degrees.
- **mailpiece clear zones**—OCR read area free of return address with logos and other extraneous printing above delivery address line. POSTNET clear zone free of all printing and patterns except barcode. FIM clear zone free of all printing except FIM.
- **window-edge clearance**—through full range of insert shift 1/8" (0.125").
- **print contrast ratio**—40 percent minimum in the red and the green portions of the optical spectrum; 45 percent if glassine windows used.
- **print quality**—sharp, uniform contrast; no voids, extraneous ink, or smudges.
- **ink color**—black or dark color.
- **background interference**—underlines, halftone backgrounds, nonaddress printing avoided.

## FLAT-SIZE MAILPIECE DESIGN CHARACTERISTICS CHECKLIST FOR PREBARCODING

The characteristics of a prebarcoded flat-size mailpiece:

- **Placement**—The barcode and address should be on the same side of the mailpiece. Either a ZIP+4 barcode or a delivery point barcode is acceptable.
- **Reflectance**—Barcode and background reflectance for automation flat-size mail are the same as address block barcoding requirements for letter-size mail.
- **Clearances**—No printing 1/8 inch to the left and right of the barcode. No printing 1/25 inch above and below the barcode. The barcode must be placed at least 1/8 inch from any *edge* of the mailpiece.
- **Skew/Rotation**—Bar rotation must not exceed 10 degrees.
- **OCR readability**—Address should be OCR readable, if possible.
- **Tabs**—Tabbing is not required for flats.
- **Polywrap**—Polywrap and shrinkwrap are not permitted unless their design is evaluated by the USPS and approved for use (see DMM Quick Service Guide 820).
- **Flexibility/Rigidity**—Barcoded flat-size pieces must meet flexibility and rigidity requirements in DMM C820.

## BARCODES

General checklist for POSTNET barcodes:

- **barcode locations**—lower right: no more than 5/8" (0.625") from bottom edge of envelope and no more than 4 3/4" (4.750") from lower right edge of envelope; address block: above recipient line or below the city, state, and ZIP Code line of address.
- **window-edge clearance**—through full range of insert shift, barcodes must maintain 1/8" (0.125") clear space on left and right sides and 1/25" (0.040") clear space above and below.
- **bar size**—full bar: 0.125" ( $\pm 0.010$ ") high; half bar: 0.050" ( $\pm 0.010$ ") high; both bars: 0.020" ( $\pm 0.005$ ") wide.
- **bar pitch**—22 bars per inch ( $\pm 2$  bars).
- **bar tilt**—5 degrees maximum.
- **print reflectance difference**—30 percent minimum in the red portion of the optical spectrum.
- **ink color**—black or dark color.
- **print quality**—sharp, uniform contrast; no voids, extraneous ink, or smudges.

## FACING IDENTIFICATION MARKS

Checklist for proper FIM use:

- **proper type**—FIM A for courtesy reply mail; FIM C for prebarcoded business reply mail.
- **location and clear zone**—top right of envelope with bars printed in space within 1/8" (0.125") to 5/8" (0.625") from top of envelope, with the leftmost bar no more than 3" from right edge of envelope.
- **Bar dimensions, pitch, and tilt**—5/8" (0.625")  $\pm$  1/8" ( $\pm$ 0.125") long; 1/32" (0.03125")  $\pm$  1/128" ( $\pm$ 0.008") wide; no more than 5 degrees combined positional and rotational skew.
- **print reflectance difference**—30 percent minimum in the red portion of the optical spectrum.
- **ink color**—black or dark color.
- **print quality**—sharp, uniform contrast; no voids, extraneous ink, or smudges.

**BUSINESS REPLY MAIL CHECKLIST**

Checklist for required BRM elements:

☐ **No Postage Necessary Endorsement**

You must print the endorsement "NO POSTAGE NECESSARY IF MAILED IN THE UNITED STATES" in the upper right corner on the face of the BRM piece. The endorsement may not extend any farther than 1 3/4 inches (1.750 inches) from the right edge of the BRM piece. It is recommended that the endorsement be enclosed in a box. The top of the box should be 1/2 inch (0.500 inch) from the top edge of the BRM piece.

☐ **Horizontal Bars**

You must print a series of horizontal bars immediately below the no postage necessary endorsement. The bars must be uniform in size, at least 1 inch long (not longer than 1-1/2 inches (1.500 inches)), 1/16 inch (0.0625 inch) to 3/16 inch (0.1875 inch) thick, and evenly spaced. The bars must not extend below the top of the delivery address line — the line directly above the city, state, and ZIP Code line. There must be at least a 1/2-inch (0.500 inch) clearance between the ZIP Code and the series of horizontal bars.

☐ **Facing Identification Mark**

You must print a facing identification mark (FIM) in the top right portion of the BRM piece. Use FIM B for BRM printed without a barcode. Use FIM C for BRM printed with a barcode.

☐ **Business Reply Legend Box**

You must print in capital letters (uppercase) "BUSINESS REPLY MAIL" above the complete delivery address. The letters must be at least 3/16 inch (0.1875 inch) high. Immediately below the business reply legend, you must print in capital letters "FIRST-CLASS MAIL," "PERMIT NO." followed by your permit number, and the issuing post office name (city and state). You must enclose those two lines in a rectangular box.

☐ **Postage Endorsement Line**

You must print in capital letters the line "POSTAGE WILL BE PAID BY ADDRESSEE" below the business reply legend box and above the complete delivery address.



### ○ **Complete Delivery Address**

You must print the complete delivery address — including the permit holder's name — directly onto the BRM piece or insert (for window envelopes). The bottom line of the address must be at least 5/8 inch (0.625 inch), but no more than 2-1/4 inch (2.250 inch), from the bottom edge of the BRM piece. A clear 1/2-inch margin is required on both the left and right edges of the BRM piece (excluding the horizontal bars).

### ○ **POSTNET Barcode**

A barcode is a series of full (tall) bars and half (short) bars printed at the bottom of a mailpiece. The barcode for BRM represents the ZIP+4 barcode. A camera-ready barcode positive may be obtained at no charge from the Postal Service (see Appendix I for the nearest postal business center).

A unique ZIP+4 code is issued to each BRM permit holder. Always make sure that the proper ZIP+4 code and barcode are printed on your BRM piece. If in doubt, contact your local postal business center for assistance.

### ○ **Permit Holder's Space**

You may use the upper left corner of the address side for a return address, logo, attention line, distribution code, or form number.

### ○ **Company Logo**

You may use your company logo in the address block if the logo does not extend below the top of the delivery address line. If the BRM piece is barcoded, the logo may extend no lower than 5/8 inch from the bottom edge of the mailpiece. The logo must not interfere with any required business reply endorsements.

### ○ **Attention or Information Lines**

If you use an attention or information line in your complete delivery address, you must place that line above the delivery address line. Determine with your mailpiece design analyst how many production sample BRM pieces must be submitted for a test before the Postal Service can approve your QBRM application. Participation in QBRM depends on whether your BRM pieces meet automation requirements.

### ○ Size Standards

To be automation-compatible, BRM letter-size pieces must measure no less than 3 1/2 inches (3.500 inches) high and 5 inches long and no more than 6 1/8 inches (6.125 inches) high and 10 1/2 inches (10.500 inches) long.

To qualify for the postcard rate, BRM cards must be at least 3 1/2 inches (3.500 inches) by 5 inches, but no larger than 4 1/4 (4.250 inches) inches by 6 inches. Larger card sizes are mailable; however, they are charged at the regular First-Class letter rates. Pieces formed of a single piece of cardstock, larger than the card maximums of 4 1/4 x 6 inches, must be a minimum of 0.009 inch in thickness.

### ○ Ink/Paper Colors and Type Styles

Not all paper and ink colors and not all type styles are compatible with automated sorting equipment. Contact your mailpiece design analyst for guidance on paper colors, ink colors, and readable type styles. Both the FIM and the barcode must have at least a 30 percent print reflectance difference. The combined effects of positional and rotational skew must be limited to  $\pm 5$  degrees from the FIM or barcode to the top or bottom edge of your BRM piece.